~~AN INTRODUCTION~~

~~TO~~ THE

POPULAR RELIGION

AND FOLKLORE

OF

NORTHERN INDIA

BY

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WESTMINSTER

1896

11 Shawal SUNDAY

18 MARCH 1962

ovince; the series of Settlement Reports from 1881 to 1911, ose for 1921, except Bombay, being at present unpublished; valuable series of monographs issued by the Government Assam; Rev. S. Endle, the Kacharis; Lt.-Col. P. R. T. rdon, the Khasis; Mr. T. C. Hodson, the Naga tribes of nipur and the Meitheis; Major A. Playfair, the Garos; . E. Stack and Sir C. Lyall, the Mikirs; Lt.-Col. J. Shake- the Lushai Kuki Clans. Much information has been from the monumental *Bombay Gazetteer* by Sir J. M. pell, *Panjab Notes and Queries* edited by Sir R. Temple, and *Indian Notes and Queries* edited by myself. In fact, the ance of useful material is so great that it has been necessary, considerations of space, to reject much that is valuable, quote the passages selected only in an abbreviated form. not attempted to treat the subject in a comparative way luding parallel beliefs and ritual from races outside India, ve those on the immediate borderland. But I have occasionally references to standard works on Comparative Religion d Ritual, such as those of Sir J. Frazer, Dr. E. S. Hartland, E. Tylor, Professor L. Westermarck, and others.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The investigation of the Peasant Religion of Northern India forms an important chapter in the study of the beliefs and usages of a race of the lower culture. The first difficulty is to decide the geographical limits of the inquiry. Hindustan, in the usual sense of the term, includes Northern India bounded on the south by the Narbada river. But it is impossible to exclude from the population that of the west coast and the Deccan now included in the province of Bombay. The Dravidian races of Southern India, which have been fully described by Mr. E. Thurston, Bishop H. Whitehead, Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer, the late Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, and others, fall into quite a different category, and, except incidentally, are not included in this book.

The objection will naturally be made that in the region here included there are all sorts and conditions of men. But from the earliest ages the population of Northern India has been the result of the amalgamation of many streams of foreigners with the indigenous races, or those who occupied the land before the dawn of history. The linguistic survey of India shows that at least as far west as Nimar in the Central Provinces the most primitive stratum was that of the Mon-Khmer people, Mongoloids from Eastern Tibet and the head-waters of the great Chinese rivers, now represented by tribes on the Assam frontier and by the Kols and their brethren in the range of hills crowning the Peninsula from the west to east. Next came the Dravidians, who are represented by tribes like the Gonds and Orāons who are later emigrants from their original home in Southern India. The population in the north, particularly in the Panjab, is of a mixed character, the original stratum, whatever it may have been, having been leavened by successive immigrations from regions beyond the Himalayas—Indo-Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Sakas, Indo-Parthians, Huns, Mongols. These foreigners quickly succumbed to the influence of their new environment and became Hinduized, one Hun tribe, the Gurjara, being the ancestors of some of the Rājput clans.

At some recent enumerations of the people an attempt was made to distinguish between Hindus and Animists, but it was found impossible to frame any adequate definition of the term 'Hindu' or 'Animist'. Many tribes on the borderland of the two regions retain or have acquired the characteristics of both. Some of them, like Mundas, Gonds, or Bhīls, may prefer to call themselves Hindus, because the adoption of Hinduism involves a rise in their social status. The chiefs of such tribes may outwardly conform to Hinduism by worshipping, themselves or by the vicarious service of a Brahman priest, some of the Brahmanical deities, while they retain the cults of their own tribal gods. Or, among the lower classes of the people of the northern plains, the local village, caste, or tribal godlings still receive worship, particularly by women, or both sexes resort to him for protection when some crisis, such as drought, famine, pestilence, or murrain, occurs. Hence, even if Hinduism has gained a nominal influence over such people, they, in their turn, have contributed much to Hinduism. It is so eclectic and tolerant that it recognizes the combination of the local with the orthodox cults, and some of the Animistic godlings have been promoted to the orthodox pantheon. Thus, for example, the Avatāras or incarnations of Vishnu include Varāha, the boar; Kūrma, the tortoise; Matsya, the fish; Narasinha, the man-lion; and so on, relics of a primitive theriolatry or totemism. In the case of the goddesses the cult of the benign Devi may be traced back to one of the varied manifestations of Dharti, the earth mother; Kāli is a deified tigress, Durgā Sinhavāhīnī a lioness. Others who have not quite reached orthodox rank are Hanumān, the ape, Ganesa, the rat or mouse. Such deities disclose their origin when they rank as Dvārapālas, 'door-keepers' of temples of the greater gods, who are not yet admitted to full franchise in the orthodox pantheon.

Thus, in a survey of the beliefs of the lower culture it is impossible to draw a clear line of distinction between those tribes, like those on the Assam frontier, Mundas or Dravidians, from the peasantry of the northern plains. Both retain certain beliefs and usages which, in default of a better term, may be called 'Animistic', some have been, at least nominally, absorbed into Hinduism; in others the process of absorption

is still in progress. But all these varied strains of blood which flow in their veins have been controlled by the influence of their environment.

If an attempt is made to describe in a summary way the characteristics of this type of religion and ritual, we may notice the feeling of pessimism, a tone of thought based on the exposure of the people to dangers resulting from their environment—fierce heat, torrential rain, the prevalence of malaria and epidemic disease, the periodical occurrence of drought and famine, the economical low standard of subsistence due to the pressure of a superabundant population and the disinclination to adopt improved agricultural methods. This growth of pessimism accounts for the contrast between the happiness and cheerful view of life characteristic of the Vedic culture as compared with the theology and ritual of the Brahmanic period which succeed to it. This feeling was translated into the official religion, the doctrines of the illusory and worthless character of the world which Buddhism inherited from the Hinduism prevalent at the time of its origin. Hence the religion of the peasant is largely based on a feeling of fear which it has never wholly shaken off. There are, it is true, some beneficent deities—the kindly spirits of the ancestral dead, who become testy if they fail to receive due suit and service, the house, cattle, and field guardians enumerated in the following pages. But, alas, as will be seen by numerous instances, the peasant is encompassed by myriad forms of evil—the Evil Eye, the Bhūt, and other demons, the godlings which cause disease, the machinations of the witch.

Secondly, the influence of these godlings is essentially local, confined to the village, tribe, or clan. The village, in its most typical form, is a community closely linked together by sharing a common life and common interests, with the natural result of the absence of privacy, the subordination of its members to the community represented by a village council. Among its members the highest in rank, who gained possession of the area by conquest, state grants, or peaceful settlement, are represented by a headman or body of joint proprietors, often drawn from the higher castes, while below them is a body of cultivators, artisans, traders, or menials, who serve the community. The

entry of a stranger being a source of risk, the village depends for its protection from spiritual or temporal evil on its own godling, served not by a Brahman priest, but by an officiant of the lower grade who, being supposed to be autochthonous, understands the ways of the local spirits and knows how to conciliate or coerce them. When one of these shrines reaches a special grade of efficiency, by the working of miracles or the cure of disease and the removal of other evils, its reputation begins to extend beyond its original boundaries, and in time it is taken over by a Brahman who manages it to his own advantage, and the local godling eventually blossoms out into an incarnation of one of the greater gods or goddesses. Hence the number of these manifestations is great. Originally many of them possessed no cult title, but in process of time they became known by some descriptive name or one derived from their place of origin, like the great Kāli of Calcutta, the Vindhyavāsini, 'dweller on the Vindhya Hills', the patroness of the Thugs, whose shrine is at Bindhāchal near Mirzapur.

In the same way those groups which still preserve the tribal organizations, Mundas, Gonds, and the like, have each their tribal or local godlings, and each under Brahman control assumed its present rigid form, enforcing marriage within the group, or endogamy, combined with exogamy, when the bride must be selected from a section different from that of her husband, and stringent rules prohibiting eating or smoking with members of a different group or even touching those contact with whom involves pollution. This process of morcellement thus tends to the appearance of one god or godling under many names, but these cult titles are often so inexpressive that in contrast with other religions, like that of the Greeks, they seldom supply any material useful for the discrimination of character or function. Nor is the information we possess at present regarding these godlings sufficient to tempt us to undertake the task. We know vaguely that hillmen or artisans in the plains have special godlings which control the chase, processes of agriculture or industries. But we can arrange them in groups only in an imperfect way, either because each of them has no special cult, or its worshippers are unwilling to disclose its nature lest a stranger when he understands it may destroy its efficiency.

In the same way, when a certain belief or piece of ritual is reported from a frontier tribe in Assam, a hill tribe in the Central Provinces, and a menial caste in the Panjab, we may be sure that it is generally accepted, and that further inquiries will show the missing link between the various groups of people among whom it has been observed.

Though the nation of India is deeply influenced by custom and respects the wisdom of the old men, inherited according to the theory of reincarnation from their earliest progenitor, even the religion and cults of the peasants are liable to change. The railway and road communication provided by the British Government reduces to some extent the parochialism of rural life, and the effect of Christianity and the more clearly-cut monotheism of Islam tends to encourage the belief in a Father deity which recent observers have reported to be on the increase among the peasantry. He is, of course, vaguely conceived, and is known as Paramesvar, 'great god', or Bhagwān, 'the worshipful', sometimes identified with Vishnu. But in the present intellectual and economic stage of peasant life there seems little chance of the decay of this rural worship: its ultimate fate will be a more or less complete absorption in Hinduism, whatever may be the form which that complex of beliefs and ritual chances to assume.

Meanwhile, if we are to attempt to understand the mentality of the peasant—and in the kaleidoscope of Indian politics it is well we should do so—the present attempt to bring the facts into a semblance of order may be found useful to students of Indian rural life and to those who devote themselves to the comparative treatment of belief and ritual. I think that in its improved form it may still be useful to my brother officers of the I.C.S. for whose use the first imperfect edition was written.

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I

THE GODLINGS OF NATURE

THERE are few regions of the world where Nature displays her powers in a more impressive form than in Northern India. The snow-clad peaks and dangerous passes of the Himalaya; the widespread, monotonous plains and deserts, the latter haunts of evil spirits; forests, the abode of beasts of prey and periodically devastated by fire; the chilly nights of winter when the heavens are spangled with stars more brilliant than those visible in the misty skies of Europe; the fierce heat and sudden dust-storms of the summer; the monsoon breaking to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning, resulting in floods which sweep away villages with their inhabitants, cattle, and crops; the mystery of death caused by outbreaks of plague, cholera, small-pox, or malaria; cattle murrain endemic among the herds,—all these naturally impress the imagination of the peasant. His poverty in the congested areas, his dependence on a precarious rainfall for his scanty supplies of food, the risk of hail, drought, and periodical famine tend to convince him that his very existence is menaced by calamities beyond his control, and that disease and death are always imminent. People in this, the lower stage of intellectual and economical culture, are led to attribute calamities such as these to the wrath of some offended deity, to the curse of some angry priest or ascetic, to the machinations of the witch or the malignity of evil spirits. Thus their view of life is tainted by pessimism, and from their point of view life is a constant struggle against the mighty forces of Nature and their environment.

He is thus led to adopt the doctrine of Animatism or Pre-animism—the latter a less appropriate term as it seems to imply that in order of time it is antecedent to the more general form of belief known as Animism. Animatism is based on the feeling of awe in the presence of some unknown force; 'the Hindu pays reverence to the unaccountable Thing, the startling

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experience of an unknown power', 'a vague floating *deisidaimonia*'.[1] Animism, as contrasted with Animatism, invests material objects with a kind of human consciousness and emotion, sometimes with a superhuman power and volition suggesting worship, and it is the most potent religious influence in the mind of the peasant. Among some of the Assam tribes

'there is a vague but very general belief in an Omnipotent Being, who is well disposed towards men, and whom therefore there is no necessity for propitiating. Then come a number of evil spirits who are ill-disposed towards human beings, and to whose malevolent interference are ascribed all the woes which afflict mankind. To these therefore sacrifice must be offered. These malevolent spirits are sylvan deities, spirits of the trees, the rocks and the streams, and sometimes also of the tribal ancestors.'[2]

Among the Thārus of the Nepāl Tarāi,

'when the last ray of life leaves the forest, and the darkness settles down upon their villages, all the Thāru men, women, and children huddle together inside their fast-closed huts in mortal dread of these ghostly beings [the Bhūt, or evil spirit, the Pret, the spirit of the dead], more savage and cruel than the leopards, tigers, and bears that now prowl around for their prey. Only the terrible cry of 'Fire' will bring these poor fear-stricken creatures to open their doors and remove the heavy barriers from their huts at night; and even in the daytime, amid the hum of human life, the songs of the birds, and the lowing of the cattle, no Thāru—man, woman or child—will venture along a forest line without casting a leaf, a branch, or a piece of old rag upon the Bansati formed at the entrance of the deep woods, to save themselves from the many diseases and accidents the goblins and malicious spirits can bring upon and cause them.'[3]

The following pages are mostly devoted to the investigation of this mob of godlings, ghosts and goblins, spirits kindly or malignant, who constitute the pantheon of the peasant. Largely due to the influence of Christianity and Islam, he displays an increasing belief in one omnipotent Creator, and he believes in the power of the greater gods. The better-class village in the plains usually possesses a shrine dedicated to Vishnu, Siva, or one of the Mother goddesses, Devi and her sisters, built or

[1] Lyall, *A. S.* i. 12 f., 22: cf. Risley, *People of India*, 224; Marett, 3 f.
[2] Gait, *C. R.* Assam, i. 93. [3] S. Knowles, 214.

endowed by the village landowner or moneylender, and served by a Brahman priest or a member of one of the ascetic orders. He will bow before the shrine or make an offering, or he will visit the temples of the higher gods when he goes on pilgrimage to some holy place. But his real faith is placed in his village godlings, and at some crisis of his life—when epidemic disease breaks out, when his crops wither in the drought, when his wife craves the boon of a male child—it is from the godling of his tribe, caste, or hamlet that he seeks relief. 'A man cannot expect a great incarnation of Vishnu to cure his cow, to find his lost purse; nor will public opinion tolerate his going to any respectable temple or shrine with a petition that his neighbour's wife, his ox or his ass may be smitten with some sore disease. A respectable minister will not be found to take an offering or to use his influence in such silly and scandalous jobs with any saint or deity who values his self-respect.'[1] The greater gods are always in reserve to remove his trouble, but he does not trouble himself by inquiring from what class of divinity this relief is to be won. And, after all, there is no strict line of division between god and godling, and many godlings have been promoted to the rank of gods.

The higher gods were, and usually are, known as Deva, 'the shining ones', a title which, like many others, has lost much of its dignity; for, as we shall see, the word Deo now denotes a class of demons, as the Iranians turned the Aryan Deva into demons or evil spirits. The derivative of this term, Devata or Deota, has become the name which the Indian peasant applies to his godlings. As an example we find a popular godling in Bengal, revered both by low-caste Hindus and Musalmāns, known as Devata Mahārāj, 'divine lord', who with his door-keeper, Hada, is represented by a long bamboo planted in the ground from which an old winnowing basket, a bow, a worn-out fishing-net, and a hook are suspended.[2] An Indian explained to a European that the relation of the god to the godling was that of the Government to the District Officer, of the District Officer to his orderly.[3]

There are many types and grades of these godlings, but the broad line of distinction is drawn between those who are

[1] Lyall, i. 120. [2] O'Malley, i. 251. [3] Burn, i. 74 f.

impure and those who are pure: the latter being respectable and on their way to higher rank; the former, the godlings of the menial, the carrier, or the scavenger, with whom no decent Hindu will have relations. The process of promotion is familiar to all observers of peasant religious life. If the chief of a forest tribe becomes for the sake of respectability an orthodox Hindu, he brings with him his tribal or village god, who becomes an incarnation of Vishnu or a manifestation of Siva. If a village shrine gains a reputation for miraculous cures of spirit diseases like epilepsy, or if barren women gain children by resorting to it, by and by a Brahman or an ascetic takes possession of it as a working concern, and develops it according to orthodox rule.

Sometimes the position of a godling in process of elevation to higher rank is marked by his place at a temple: if he is not at once admitted within the holy of holies, his image stands outside as a Dwārapāla or guardian. Ganesa, patron of enterprises, and Hanumān, the deified ape, are often placed in this position: at Benares Bhaironnāth is Kotwāl or protector of all the Saiva temples. In many places, as the pilgrim ascends to the great temple, there is a place known as Devadekhni, that from which the god can be viewed, and this is often occupied by one of these lower-grade deities who are just beginning to be held respectable. This process is seen going on before our eyes. Gor Bāba, a deified ghost of the lower order, has become, under the title of Goresvara, a manifestation of Siva. Bhainsāsuri, the deified buffalo, has become a form of Kāli, herself a deified tiger; Mahāmāi, the Great Mother, whose original shrine is an earthen platform with seven knobs of coloured clay at the head, is becoming known as Jagadamba Devi, Mother of the World.[1] The true menial godling is served by a hedge-priest, sometimes a member of some non-Aryan tribe, and receives as an offering the flesh of pigs or chickens, which are an abomination to the true believer. Naturally one grade tends to merge into a higher, as when a Brahman priest will attend a low-caste wedding and recite the sacred verses, but he will not approach the place where the local godling is being worshipped; or, as in the Panjab, where Brahmans will often consent to be fed in the name of a godling, but will not accept offerings from his shrine, or will

[1] *A. S. R.* xvii. 141.

allow their girls, but not their boys, to do so, for if the girls die in consequence it does not much matter.[1]

The most important of these Nature godlings is Sūrajnārāyan, Nārāyan being one of Vishnu's cult titles, meaning 'son of man', or 'resting-place of Nāra', the primal male.[2] He is revered as the source of light and heat, dreaded as the cause of heat-stroke or fever, and no one who has seen the Indian sun rising in his glory, or sinking to rest in the gorgeous evening sky of the rainy season, can wonder that he is venerated. His prominence in the Vedic age is shown by his five-fold manifestation: Sūrya or Savitri, the quickener, Mitra, Pūshan, and Vishnu, representing various types of solar energy, but still his position is one of dependence, and he is said to have been produced by the greater gods.[3] He is depicted sitting in a chariot, drawn by a seven-faced horse, driven by Aruna, or with three, four, or seven horses yoked to his car.[4] As he is a present, visible deity, he has little need of temple or image, but there are some dedicated to him, such as Konārak, 'corner-Sun', or 'Sun of Kona', in Orissa.[5] He was worshipped at Multān in the form of Āditya as a wooden image covered with red cordovan leather, two rubies representing his eyes, or as a golden figure studded with gems.[6] But this may not have been a Vedic cult, but another probably introduced by Iranian missionaries, who entered India under the Greek successor of Alexander and the Scythians who followed them, and were adopted into the Brahman ranks as Sākadwīpīya Brahmans, or those of the Scythian island in Central Asia, just as the Parsis brought their sacred fire to the west coast.[7] Sun-worship, again, came from Central Asia with the Hūna or Hun invaders of the fifth century, and the Gurjaras, one of the Hun tribes, erected temples in his honour at Srimāl or Bhīnmāl in Rajputana.[8]

Early Hindu Rajas, half priests, half kings, were held responsible for the weather and the harvests. When a king avoids

[1] Ibbetson, 113.
[2] Bhandarkar, 30.
[3] Macdonell, *V. M.* 30 f.; Muir, v. 158 f.
[4] Grünwedel, 41; Smith, *H. F. A.* 187; *J. R. A. S.* 1918, p. 521; M. Sherring, 59.
[5] Monier-Williams, 343; *I. G. I.* xv. 391 f.; *J. R. A. S.* 1909, pp. 1073 f.; Barth, 257 f.
[6] Alberuni, *India*, i. 116; Beal, ii. 274.
[7] Grierson in Risley, *C. R.* i. 291; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 45; *J. A. S. B.* 1901, p. 75; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 229.
[8] *J. R. A. S.* 1907, p. 987.

taking the property of sinners, men are born in due time, are long-lived, crops spring up as they are sown, children do not die, and no misshaped offspring is born.[1] Hence naturally they were worshippers of the sun. The great monarch Harsha, in the seventh century of our era, was 'by natural proclivity a devotee of the Sun. Day by day at sunrise he bathed, arrayed himself in white silk, wrapped his head in a white cloth', 'and kneeling eastward on the ground in a circle smeared with saffron paste, presented for an offering a bunch of red lotuses set in a pure vessel of ruby, and tinged, like his own heart, with the Sun's hue. Solemnly at dawn, at midday, and at eve he muttered a prayer for offspring, humbly with earnest heart repeating a hymn having the Sun as its centre'.[2] All the colours used being appropriate to the sun imply a magical rite. One division of the Rājputs, the Sūryavansi, claims descent from the sun, and one of the chief Rājput ceremonies was the Asvamedha, or horse sacrifice in honour of the sun. The representation of the Sūryavansi tribe, the Maharaja of Udaipur, gives precedence to the sun at his court. His portal, the Sūryapol, is the chief entrance to the city. His name gives dignity to the Sūryamahall, the chief apartment of the palace, and from the Sūryagokhru or balcony of the sun, the descendant of Rāma shows himself in the dark monsoon as the sun's representative, a magical presentment of the sun bursting through the clouds. 'A huge painted Sun of gypsum in high relief, with gilded rays, adorns the hall of audience, and in front of it is the throne.' His image is shown on a plate of gold attached to the royal standard, and the royal parasol takes its name from the orb.[3] Siva, as a god of fertility, is naturally associated with the sun, and at Valabhi, a kingdom closely connected with the royal family of Udaipur, there was a peculiar blend of both these cults, while at Udaipur the Mahārāja is officially minister and regent of the royal Saiva shrine of Eklingji, the great Saiva lingam.[4] Even the poorest Rājput in Central India presents his new-born son with a figure of the sun and a horse, which is worn round his neck as an amulet.

Sun-worship plays an important part in the domestic ritual

[1] Manu, *Laws*, ix. 246–7. [2] Bana, 104. [3] Tod, ii. 659 f.
[4] *B. G.* i, part i, 98; Tod, i. 264, ii. 598.

of the peasant. Sunday, though there are no Sabbath observances, is in a way sacred, and some people, as a mark of chastity, do not eat salt on that day, do not set the milk for butter, but turn it into rice-milk, a portion of which is given to Brahmans. Brahmans are sometimes fed at harvest in honour of the sun, and the pious householder bows before him as he goes to his work at dawn. As day begins to dawn the orthodox Hindu repeats the Gāyatri, the oldest of all hymns: 'Let us meditate on that excellent glory of the divine Sun, the giver of life! May he enlighten our understandings!' But the sleepy peasant, when he wakes, mutters only 'Sūrajnārāyan!' bowing to him with folded hands, one leg raised from the ground, after he has finished his morning ablutions.

The solstices and equinoxes are times of crisis, when protection from evil spirits is specially needed. The Hindu divides his solar year into two parts: the Uttarāyana, when the sun appears to move from south to north, a period lucky for all enterprises; the Dakshināyana, when he moves southward, the unlucky season. Hence the south is the region of gloom, the abode of Yama, god of the dead. The former begins at the nominal winter solstice, 13 January, when the sun enters the sign of Makara or Capricornus, marked by the festival known as the Makar or Til Sankrānt, 'sesamum day', because sesamum is presented to the astrologer who fixes the auspicious time for bathing and worship of the sun.[1] Each Sankrānt, or passage of the sun from one constellation to another, is marked by ceremonies. In the lower Himalaya at the Mīn Sankrānt (March–April) rice, coloured with Haldi or turmeric, is smeared on the threshold to bar evil spirits, whence the day is called Haldua; that in April–May is called Bikh, 'poison', because on that day children are branded on the navel to relieve windy colic; that in June–July is Harela, 'greenery', because grain is made to sprout like the Gardens of Adonis,[2] and amidst the shoots clay images of Siva and Pārvati are placed, and their symbolical marriage is performed; the August–September day is called Ghi or 'butter' day, because even the poorest family must eat some at this time; that of September–October is the

[1] Gupte, 144 ff.; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 261; *B. G.* ix, part i, 394.
[2] Frazer, *G. B.*, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, i. 236 ff.

time for collecting hay and fuel, part of which the children make into a bonfire into which they fling a share of the firstfruits as they sing and dance; that of January is observed by baking little images of birds made of flour in butter and oil, which are hung on the children's necks and given next day, the winter solstice, probably with the intention of passing away evil, to the crows and other birds.[1]

Sun-worship prevails also among the non-Aryan tribes. The Mālā, a hill tribe in Bengal, worship at the head of their pantheon the sun under the title of Dharma or Dharma Gusāin, 'lord of piety and right', who among Orāons is usually a male, married annually to Dharti, Mother Earth, at the Khaddi or festival which marks the growth of vegetation; when sacrifice is needed Kisāns sacrifice in his honour his bird, a white cock; Bhuiyas, like the Mālī, know him as Borām or Dharm Devata; Korwas call him Bhagwān, 'the Almighty', and worship him in the open air, using a white-ant hill as an altar; Kharias call him Bero, and 'every head of a family should, during his lifetime, make not less than five sacrifices to this deity—the first of fowls, the second of a pig, the third of a white goat, the fourth of a ram, and the fifth of a buffalo. He is then considered sufficiently propitiated for that generation, and regarded as an ungrateful god if he does not behave handsomely to his votary'; Kols worship him as the Creator, Sing Bonga, and make prayers and sacrifices to him as to a beneficent deity who has no pleasure in the death of his subjects, though as a father he chastises his erring children; he married Chandra, the moon, but she deserted him, whereupon he cut her in two, but he repented of his anger, and at the full moon he restored her original shape.[2] Santāls worship the sun at the Jom Sin festival, when mysterious rites are performed in the depths of forest, and Gāros, whose god of fertility, Saljong, is represented by the sun, place the crops, without whose favour the harvest cannot be reaped, and worship him at their annual feast when his bird, the cock, is killed in the fields, its blood is sprinkled on an altar, and some spirits are poured on the ground before it.[3]

[1] Atkinson, ii. 869 ff., with full details.

[2] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 57; *E. R. E.* ix. 502; Dalton, 130, 132, 133, 141, 157, 159, 186.

[3] Bradley-Birt, *An Indian Upland*, 131; Playfair, 81.

In Sylhet the Sūryapuja is held in the spring, when a plantain tree is set up in the courtyard, decorated with flowers, and offerings are made to it, while the women sing hymns in honour of the sun.[1] Dāvars in Bombay worship the sun at the Dīvāli, or feast of lights, a magical act to promote his return to the north, throw red lead towards him, and offer chickens, which are not killed but flung in the air and allowed to fly into the jungle bearing evil with them.[2] In Nāgpur the lowest castes worship him under the name of Nārāyandeo, by eating ceremonially pigs specially fattened for the rite which lasts till the cocks begin to crow in the morning.[3] In Bengal the chief sun festival is the Chhahpuja, held, as its name implies, on the sixth day of the light fortnight in Kārttik (October–November), when the people assemble near a river or tank and make offerings of white flowers, cooked food, and fruit to the setting sun, the officiant being not a Brahman but an elderly woman of the family; unmarried girls, in the hope of winning a good husband and a kindly mother-in-law, and married women who long for a son, worship him; even Musalmān women join in the rite with the object of averting the wrath of the dreaded Chhathi, the impersonation of the sixth day, the dangerous crisis after child-birth.[4] The sun has great power in curing disease, particularly that of a white nature like leprosy, a belief illustrated by the tale of Sambū, son of Krishna, who is said to have founded the sun temple at Multān in the hope of gaining relief from this disease.[5]

Circumambulation of a sacred place or person, known as Pradakshina, or keeping the right side towards it, is an important element in ritual. This resembles the movement of the hands of a clock, 'through the button-hole', as we pass the decanters round our dining-tables. In this direction the oxen move as they tread out the grain, the bride and bridegroom round the sacred fire or the central pole of the marriage shed. But when the chief mourner circumambulates the funeral pyre he does so in the reverse direction, and not five but four times,

[1] Allen, 97. [2] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 187.
[3] Russell, *Nagpur Gaz.* i. 69.
[4] Gait, *C. R.* Bengal, i. 188; O'Malley, i. 252; Ja'far Sharīf, 35 ff.
[5] Gait, *op. cit.* i. 188; Barth, 259 note; *J. R. A. S.* 1915, p. 423 f., 1919, p. 129.

because five is the auspicious number.[1] This lucky form of circumambulation is made by a pilgrim who in pursuance of a vow is obliged to march up one bank of a sacred river to the source and return along the other bank, and in the case of pilgrims who follow the holy road round some sacred place like Benares or Mathura, or city officials who make the round of the walls.[2] Some tribes, like Orāons and Mundas, combine both forms of movement.[3] This movement in the course of the sun acts as a magical fertility charm.

The auspicious movement is reproduced in the orthodox type of the Swastika, 'auspicious', symbol; the reverse, the Sauvastika, being typical of the moon, night, or destruction embodied in the cult of Kāli.[4] The Bon or Bonpo cult in Tibet is lunar and attended with blood sacrifice and dragon worship, and accordingly it uses the unorthodox form, as do the Red Lamas in moving their prayer-wheels.[5] The Lhota Nāga who has sacrificed a Mithan bull walks widdershins or in the reverse direction round it to the door of his house, which he enters after washing his hands and knife.[6] The trader draws the sign of his lucky Swastika on the fly-leaf of his ledger; it is painted on the house-wall near the door-post to repel the Evil Eye and demons. It holds the first place among the Jain lucky marks; it is drawn on the shaven heads of children on the marriage day in Gujarāt, and a red circle with a Swastika in the centre marks the place where the household deities are kept.[7]

Regarding the sun as the source of fertility, the Vedic Indo-Aryans performed the rite of Nishkramana, 'carrying-out', by bringing the young child outside the house to salute the rising sun, and nowadays in Gujarāt a Brahman woman makes a square enclosing the auspicious Swastika in her courtyard, takes her baby in her arms, points out the sun to it, sings a hymn in his honour, and prays for a long life for herself and her child.[8] It is also commonly believed that women can be fertilized by

1 Stevenson, *Rites*, 152; Shakespear, 165.
2 *B. G.* iv. 302.
3 Sarat Chandra Roy, *Oraons*, 287, *Mundas*, 454.
4 J. Wilson, *passim*; *J. R. A. S.* xviii. 391 ff., 402 f., 408, xxi. 419; D'Alviella, 32 ff.
5 Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 389; Hedin, i. 332, ii. 29; *E. R. E.* ii. 122, iii. 659, iv. 327 f., xii. 333.
6 Mills, 140 f.
7 Sir J. Campbell, 70.
8 Monier-Williams, 358; Stevenson, *Rites*, 18.

the sun, and girls on attaining puberty are secluded from the sight of him.[1] A childless woman desiring offspring bathes, stands naked before the sun, and implores him to remove her barrenness.[2] A Rājput story tells how a girl became pregnant because she incautiously repeated the Gāyatri hymn which she learned from her preceptor, and the same tale is told of an ancestress of Chingiz Khan and Tīmūr the Lame.[3]

The position of the moon is very similar to that of the sun. Chandra, the moon, in later Vedic literature became known as Soma, a name also applied to the mysterious beverage used in Brahmanical rites, and the tale was told that Soma was being drunk up by the gods and so waning till it is filled up again by the sun.[4] But in the older sacred books little is said of the moon, but now it controls the calendar ; the new and full moon are important dates for festivals and other rites ; marriage should be performed in the crescent moon, and thus it comes to be important to the peasant. He lays stress on the fact that the light half of the month is auspicious, but the period of the moon's waning is the season for rites of a solemn kind such as the Srāddha or propitiation of the dead. The Amāvas or no-moon day is unlucky, and kept as a day of rest by traders, shopkeepers, and artisans, and should it fall on Monday, the Somvati Amāvas, it is sacred, people fast, bathe, make gifts to Brahmans, and worship the holy fig-tree.[5] On the second day of the bright fortnight when people look at the moon they uncover their heads and feet, place their forefingers between their eyebrows, make obeisance, and fling a cotton thread towards the moon, hoping to get a silver one instead, and they take care that the first person they see on rising that morning is innocent or lucky, and if there is any doubt about this they look at a rupee.[6] At the first sight of the new moon Panjabis take a few threads from the end of their turbans and present them to the moon, saying, 'O Moon ! Make us prosperous and happy, give us bread and clothes in plenty !' Children bow to their elders, and newly married people receive gifts from their parents-in-law and

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 207 : cf. Frazer, *G. B.*, Balder the Beautiful, i. 22 ff.
[2] *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 35.
[3] Tod, i. 274 ; W. Erskine, i. 23 note.
[4] Macdonell, *V. M.* 112 ; Macdonell–Keith, *V. I.* i. 254 ; *E. R. E.* xi. 685.
[5] Gupte, 159 ff.
[6] *B. G.* ix, part i, 397.

other relations.[1] Bhīls show much regard for the moon, and swear by the twelve second days (*bārah bīj*) of each month, when the moon is usually visible for the first time.[2]

A remarkable belief is attached to the new moon of the month Bhādon (August–September). Whoever looks at this new moon becomes a victim to false accusation during the coming year, and the only method of averting this is to get some one to shy brickbats at your house, an act which would usually be considered to be a grievous outrage. The legendary explanation of this belief, which comes down from ancient times, is that Satrājit, in return for devotion to the sun, received from him the wonderful Syamantaka gem which yielded daily eight loads of gold, and dispelled all fear of portents, wild beasts, fire, robbers, and famine. Satrājit falsely accused Krishna of stealing it, and in a Kashmiri story of Krishna's adventures it is stated that this false charge against him was due to his having looked at the moon on the fourth day of Bhādon.[3] The festival is generally known as Ganesa Chaturthi, 'the fourth of Ganesa', when there is a special worship of the elephant-headed godling.[4] At Benares a festival known as Dhela Chauth Mela, 'the clod festival of the fourth', is held, when the city vagabonds amuse themselves by throwing stones at their neighbours' houses.[5] In Bihār it is known as Chauth Chandra, that of the fourth day of the waning moon, when a general fast is observed till evening, when the fast is broken by eating rice and curds, white food appropriate to the moon, to whom a Brahman priest presents flowers and sweetmeats.[6] The object of the rite is possibly due to the desire to avert Nemesis in the form of the Evil Eye or the attacks of evil spirits by means of abuse.[7] In Orissa in the Khurda estate the absence of gardens and fruit-trees is explained by the fact that from time immemorial the people think it lucky to be annoyed and abused by their neighbours at a festival which apparently corresponds with the Ganesa Chaturthi. So they mutilate the forest-trees and trample down the gardens of their neighbours, and in this way court

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 126. [2] Luard, ii. 26, 68, with a photograph.
[3] *Vishnu Purana*, 425 ff., and information from Sir G. Grierson.
[4] Balaji Sitaram Kothari, 39 ff. [5] M. Sherring, 221.
[6] *N. I. N. Q.* v. 23. [7] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.*, The Magic Art, i. 279 ff.

fortune by drawing on themselves the wrath of the injured owners.[1] A rite like this would naturally be associated with Ganesa, who is involved at the beginning of any important enterprise.

The Indo-Aryans regarded the moon as a male deity, but the Angāmi Nāgas suppose the sun to be a male, the moon a female, and Susimi, the Gāro moon goddess, gives riches and cures the blind and the lame.[2] The Meitheis believe that there were once two sun gods, one of whom when wounded became the moon, and the Lhota Nāgas say that the moon was once brighter than the sun, till the present sun, seeing that the earth was being scorched and burnt, smeared the face of the moon with cow-dung, so that it now gives a feeble light.[3] Many explanations have been suggested to account for the waxing and waning of the moon, and for the spots on its surface. According to one story, the moon married the twenty-seven Nakshatras or lunar asterisms, daughters of Daksha, the patron of animal and vegetable life. But their husband specially loved Rohini, the red cow, the asterism of Taurus including Aldebaran, and the other daughters complained to Daksha, who caused the moon to undergo perpetual consumption. Then the moon appealed to Siva, who was then at his holy place Prabhāra in Kāthiāwār, and the great god ordered that the moon's waning should last only a fortnight, and that he should then wax again.[4] Another tale tells that one day when Ganesa was riding his rat he fell off, and the moon laughed at his misfortune, whereupon Ganesa cursed the moon, 'Thy face shall be black because thou didst laugh at me'. But the other gods interfered, and finally Ganesa was induced to consent that only parts of the moon's face should be blackened as a punishment. This is said to have happened at the Chauth Chandra festival already discussed. On this night it is said that the wild hogs hide themselves from the sight of the moon, and men of the Kunbi caste hunt them down and kill them. This is the only day in the year when Prabhu clerks in Bombay eat the flesh of the wild pig, and though at other times they do not refrain from killing rats, on this day they scatter food for them, possibly as the attendants

[1] Hunter, *Orissa*, ii. 140 f.
[2] Hutton, *Angami*, 259; Playfair, 82.
[3] Hodson, *Nagas*, 111; Mills, 172.
[4] *B. G.* viii. 608 f.

of Ganesa.[1] There is a clear line of distinction drawn between the domesticated and the wild pig, the latter a 'sacred' animal, slain and eaten sacramentally by Rājputs.[2] Again, the moon fell in love with Ahalyā, wife of Gautama the sage, and when the holy man caught them together he cursed his wife who was turned into a stone, and he threw his shoe at the moon and thus caused the black marks on his surface. Others say that it was Brihaspati, Jupiter, the preceptor of the gods, as he returned from bathing, who found the moon with his wife, and he threw his dripping waist-cloth at the moon and caused the marks on his face. It is an old belief, embodied in the name Sasadhara, 'having spots like a hare', that the moon spots represent a hare running on the surface.[3] Bharias, notorious thieves in the Central Provinces, believe that the spots on the moon are a banyan-tree which the Almighty planted to diminish its light, and give them a chance to ply their profession.[4] Little children in the United Provinces are taught to call the moon their Māmū or maternal uncle, and they watch an old woman working her spinning-wheel on its face. Khāsis say that the moon made love to his elder sister, and when the sun heard of this she was wrath and covered him with ashes, so he shines with a white light and the marks on his face are caused by the ashes which clung to it.[5] In a Gāro story the sun was jealous of the beauty of his sister the moon and threw mud at her. She complained to her mother who gave her no satisfaction, saying that she was rightly punished for tale-bearing, and that the mud should evermore cling to her face.[6]

The moon is popularly regarded as the source of moisture and fertility, and one of her old titles was Aushadipati, 'ruler of plants'. She thus more than other plants controls diseases, specially those believed to be the result of spirit attacks like lunacy, hydrophobia, or consumption, which are supposed to be more severe in the dark fortnight of the month. Water impregnated with the rays of the moon is therefore useful in such cases, and Musalmāns in Lucknow 'drink the moon', that is to say they put out a vessel of water in a place where its

[1] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 93, 105; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 39.
[2] Tod, ii. 661, iii. 1381.
[3] *Jataka*, iii. 34 ff.; Somadeva, ii. 66 f.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 248.
[5] Gurdon, 172 f.
[6] Playfair, 85.

rays are reflected in it. The patient must look steadily at the reflection of the moon in the basin, shut his eyes, and drink the dose at a draught, which is a remedy for palpitation of the heart, and Kāyasth women of the writer caste in Bombay fast, mark a clay jug with turmeric, offer flowers to the moon, and then sip the water.[1] At the full moon in the month of Kuār (September–October) Marātha Brahmans lie awake all night, as they believe that nectar drips from the moon, lay out pots of milk in the moonlight to catch it, and drink the contents as a mark of honour to a first-born son or daughter.[2]

There is little direct worship of the moon, and when it is worshipped it is usually in conjunction with Sūrya, but the forehead of Siva is marked with the crescent moon, which was his share of the products of the churning of the ocean, whence he is called Chandrasekhara, 'moon-crested', appropriate to a god of fertility. The dark side of the moon is the abode of the Pitri, the sainted ancestors. In the bright fortnight it is gladdened by these spirits, but in the dark period it sends them forth to be reincarnated on earth. Those who die during the light fortnight at the summer solstice attain bliss in the sun; those who die in the dark fortnight at the winter solstice have to return to earth when they have enjoyed their allotted period of happiness.[3]

Eclipses of sun and moon play an important part in the public and family ritual, and there are many explanations to account for their occurrence. Gāros and some cognate tribes suppose that the evil spirit Nawang swallows the sun and moon, and when the first shadow falls on their surface they beat drums and blow horns to scare him, while the Lhota Nāgas think that eclipses are caused by a great dog in the sky which tries to eat these luminaries. An eclipse portends that great men will die, so no work is done next day.[4] On the North-Western Frontier it is supposed that a snake coming out to eat the moon obscures it, or that an army of fairies is flying between it and the earth.[5]

[1] Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, 158; *B. G.* ix, part i, 67.
[2] Russell, *Chhindwara Gaz.* i. 47.
[3] Alberuni, *India*, i. 232: cf. *E. R. E.* viii. 35.
[4] Playfair, 88; Mills, 172 f.; Sarat Chandra Roy, *Mundas*, 489; Shakespear, 92.
[5] Latimer, i. 93: the Toda belief is similar, Rivers, 593.

Bhotiyas think it advisable to let off guns at an eclipse to prevent the blacksmith from seizing sun or moon.[1] A Kabui Nāga story tells how a man's children were cured of leprosy by the bark of a certain tree, but when a piece of it was put out in the sunshine the sun stole it, but the owner's dog tracked the thief and devoured him, and he sometimes catches and eats the moon in the same way.[2] Among Hindus of the plains eclipses are attributed to the Daitya or demon Rāhu, 'the looser or seizer', who drank some of the Amrita or nectar produced at the churning of the ocean: the sun and moon detected him and informed Vishnu, who cut off his head and two of his arms. But as he had become immortal by drinking the nectar his head and tail were tranferred to the heavens, where the head wreaks its vengeance on sun and moon by occasionally swallowing them, and the tail, Ketu, 'brightness', gave birth to a numerous progeny of comets and fiery meteors. Ketu is now a demon who brings disease, and Rāhu in Bengal is the tribal godling of menial castes like Dusādhs and Dhangars who propitiate him by a special fire sacrifice.[3]

Hence an eclipse is a crisis, a time of danger because demons are abroad. It is one of the Brahman's privileges to receive gifts from the pious, but he must not accept such as are degrading, like those intended to avert the dangerous influence of certain stars, and in particular the Chhāyadān or 'shadow gift', made at eclipses, which consists of a vessel of ghi or clarified butter, in which the donor observes his reflection and then drops in some money.[4] Rāhu, again, is said to have been once a scavenger, or a scavenger's godling. Accordingly scavengers beg during eclipses and pious Hindus make gifts to them as his kinsmen in the hope that they will make intercession to him.[5] A similar privilege is claimed by the Joshi, or astrologer, who is supposed to be able to influence the stars.[6] Another explanation of the connexion of scavengers with eclipses is that the sun and moon once borrowed money from a Dom outcast, and as they refused to pay the debt a Dom sometimes devours them and vomits them up when the eclipse is over. This, borrowed

[1] C. A. Sherring, *Mem. A. S. B.* viii. 116.
[2] Hodson, *Nagas*, 129.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* i. 254 ff.; Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 355 f.
[4] Bana, i. 219.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 232; *B. G.* ix, part i, 335, 395; Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 139 note, 141 note.
[6] Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 66.

from the menial and degraded tribes, may be at the root of the common belief about Rāhu.

No cooked food should be eaten for twelve hours before an eclipse of the sun and for eight before that of the moon. Frequent eclipses, particularly of the sun and moon nearly together, portend grave political danger. Before an eclipse begins all the house water-jars are emptied lest a demon may enter them, and stores of pickles and other confections are locked up to save them from pollution. The family priest lays a blade of the holy Kusa grass (*Poa cynosuroides*) on the threshold, and it is wise to bathe one's person and the images of the household gods which share in the pollution.[1] The Mundas bring every metal article outside the house and expose them while the eclipse lasts.[2] The careful Hindu housewife sprinkles Ganges water on leaves of the Tulasi or holy basil, and puts them into the drinking water and cooked food as a protection. A pregnant woman is in special danger during an eclipse and is subject to many taboos. She must do no work lest her child may be born deformed, and this deformity bears some relation to the work she does: if she sews cloth the child may have a hole in its flesh, generally close to the ear; if she cuts anything it will have a hare-lip; if she uses a knife or scissors it will be born with a cut on its body; if she eats anything it will be born mad. As a protection from such danger a circle of cow-dung is drawn round her waist; she is shut up in a dark room where no ray from the demon-haunted sun or moon may fall upon her, and pregnant cattle have their horns smeared with red lead. A Brahman must not sleep on a bed or eat on the day of an eclipse, and if the sun or moon happen to set while eclipsed he must fast next day as well.[3]

Bathing in a sacred place is the most effectual way of relieving sun and moon from the attack of the demon, because bathing removes a man's pollution and renders him pure enough to recite the Mantras or holy texts which scare the demon.[4] While bathing the worshipper should be attended by a Brahman who recites the Gāyatri hymn. During a lunar eclipse it is advisable to bathe at Benares; during a solar, at Kurukshetra, the scene of

[1] *B. G.* ix, part i, 395.
[2] Sarat Chandra Roy, 489.
[3] Stevenson, *Rites*, 245.
[4] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 15.

the battle in the Great War. Bernier[1] gives a graphic account of the bathing at Delhi during an eclipse in 1666, and similar sights may be witnessed along the holy rivers at the present day. In the lower Himalayas, on the occasion of an eclipse, offerings were placed in a brazen jar to an image of a snake deity stamped on a piece of metal, because these deities have general power of influencing the weather.[2] In Ladakh ram's horns are fixed on the bark of apricot trees as a propitiatory offering during an eclipse, and such trees are expected to bear ever afterwards an unfailing crop of the choicest fruit.[3] In the villages, however, the most usual remedy is for women to go about beating brass pans to scare Rāhu from his prey.

The constellations receive less worship than the greater luminaries. Hindus name nine, the Navagraha, or 'nine seizers': Sūrya, Sūraj, the sun; Soma, Chandra, the moon; Rāhu, Ketu, the ascending and descending nodes; Sukra, Venus; Mangala, Mars; Budha, Mercury; Brihaspati, Jupiter; Sani, Saturn. They are worshipped in the family ritual by setting within a square marked with lines of powdered quartz a stool covered with a cloth on which heaps of rice are piled, and on the top is placed a jar full of water, the mouth of which is stopped with mango leaves and a coco-nut, and a white thread is fastened round it. Flowers and sandal-wood paste are offered, and the jar is sprinkled with milk, curds, butter, honey, and sugar. Finally, the sacred fire is set alight with sticks from a holy tree.[4] Sani, Saturn, is regarded as unlucky, it is said, because he is believed to move slowly, and he brings ill luck. Only a low order of Brahmans, the Dakaut, will take the propitiatory offerings dedicated to him, and persons who are afflicted by this unlucky planet, who is said to be a degraded oilman by caste, offer sweet oil, black pulse, and leaves of the Rui tree (*Calotropis gigantea*) to Hanumān, the ape godling, whose day is Saturday.[5]

The peasant knows little about the signs of the zodiac, save that the Brahman astrologer marks in his horoscope the sign under which his son was born, and from this predicts his future and selects his secret name. The farmer knows all or some of

[1] pp. 300 ff. [2] Atkinson, ii. 913 f.
[3] Moorcroft, ii. 4: on offerings of horns see Hutton, *Angami*, 162.
[4] *B. G.* ix, part i, 392 f.
[5] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 139; Balaji Sitaram Kothari, 13 f.

the Nakshatras or lunar asterisms because he is taught a string of mnemonic verses which instruct him about the effects of the weather at certain asterisms on his crops, and when the astrologer selects his son's name the first letter of it should be that of the asterism when he was born. He knows Kumbha or Aquarius because every twelfth year when Jupiter enters this sign great bathing fairs are held at Allahabad and Hardwar. The worst of all the asterisms is Mūl, 'the root', the 24th, or, as some say, the 17th or 19th, usually identified with Scorpio. When a child is born in Mūl it is supposed that it will be beset by the angry spirits of those ancestors who met with a violent death and have become Rakshasas or demons. Parents in Kumaun are advised to abandon such a child, or to avert the danger by an elaborate rite of propitiation.[1] In the Panjab such a child is sent away to be named by a stranger, and it is not brought back till it is grown up, or it is dedicated to a temple.[2] In any case, when the father sees it for the first time he must not look straight at it, but at its reflection in a pot of oil. If a man dies in Mūl four other deaths in the family may be anticipated. To avert this danger four figures in human shape are made of flour paste or grass and burnt with the corpse, just as in Madras if a man dies on a Saturday another death is likely to occur in the family, and to avert this danger a living animal, a ram, goat, or fowl, is sacrificed at the funeral.[3] In Rajputana the Mīna father of a child born in Mūl does not send his clothes to be washed or shave for twenty-seven days.[4]

Orthodox Hindus believe that the Great Bear represents the seven Rishis, or great saints. In the Hindu-Kush it is called 'The Maiden's corpse', the four corner stars being her bier; Persians call it Haft Birādarān, 'The Seven Brothers', or Banātu-n-na'sh, 'Daughters of the Bier', or the pall-bearers; Dhuri rice-pounders in the Central Provinces suppose it to be a bed with three thieves tied to it: they came to steal an old woman's bed, but the Almighty caught them and tied them down for ever.[5] Dhruva, the regent of the Pole Star, was

[1] Atkinson, ii. 914 ff.; *N. I. N. Q.* v. 94 f.; Martin, i. 157 f.: cf. Macdonell–Keith, i. 418.
[2] Harikishan Kaul, i. 301.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 375; Dubois, 500.
[4] Healy, i. 165.
[5] Biddulph, 94; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 529.

slighted by his step-mother, left his home, and by the advice of the Rishis devoted himself to the service of Vishnu who raised him to the heavens. He is the emblem of permanence, bride and bridegroom following the ancient rite of worshipping him and using this form of magic to secure the constancy of both in their married life.[1] The Pleiades, the Krittikās, a word probably meaning 'the web', are closely connected with agriculture,[2] and it has been suggested that 'the object of the non-Aryan races was to find a constellation which marked the 1st of November, the beginning of their spring. This they found in the Pleiades, which, as they noted, set immediately after the sun on the 1st of November, and continued to set later than the sun up to the beginning of April, when they were no longer visible in the sky. They reappeared again in May, to set before the sun, and this they continued to do till the end of October. Hence their year was divided into two seasons of six months each, from November to May, and May to November'.[3] The Angāmi Nāgas call the Pleiades a party of seven men who went out to dig bamboo roots, but fell into an ambuscade and were killed; Gāros say that they represent the cock sacrificed at the cremation of a corpse to lead the spirit to the better land.[4] Canopus is the Rishi Agastya, one of the ancient Aryan missionaries to Southern India, who won a place in Heaven by his loyalty, but people on the seaboard, like the Sunār goldsmiths of Bombay, will not touch the Agastya tree (*Aeschynomene grandiflora*), and dislike bathing in the sea because the holy man once swallowed it up.[5] Orion is Mrigasiras, the head of Brahmā in the form of a stag, which was struck off by Siva when the god attempted violence to his own daughter, Sandhyā, the twilight; or it is the plough of one of the Pāndava brethren left there after they had finished tilling the heavens, and Gāros think that his belt represents the pig brought to a funeral as food for the mourners.[6] An old name for the Milky Way was Nāgavīthi, 'a row of snakes', or it is the path along which the heavenly elephant passes to eat the bamboo shoots, of which he is very fond. Persians call it Kahkashān, 'the dragging of a

[1] Macdonnell-Keith, i. 405; *J. R. A. S.* 1910, pp. 461, 468.
[2] Frazer, *G. B.*, Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild, i. 307 ff.
[3] Hewitt, 123 ff.
[4] Hutton, *Angami*, 252; Playfair, 86.
[5] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 140.
[6] Playfair, 86.

bundle of straw' through the sky: Hindus, Ākāshgangā, 'the heavenly Ganges', or Bhagwān ki Kachhahri, 'the court-house of the Almighty', Swargaduārī, or 'the gate of Paradise', or in the Panjab Berā dā ghās, 'the path of Noah's ark'.

It is commonly believed that sun and moon are the eyes of the Almighty, and the stars the spirits of virtuous men, who enjoy felicity in Heaven for the period measured by the amount of their Karma, or accumulated merit. When this has become exhausted they fall to earth in the form of shooting stars and are reincarnated. Lhota Nāgas say that shooting stars are the falling dung of the stars.[1] If you found time to utter a wish before such a star disappears your prayer will be granted, but it is a wise precaution to thrust four or five fingers into your mouth lest your soul may join the company of some falling spirit. Musalmāns think that falling stars are hot coals flung by Allāh from Heaven at Shaitan or Satan, who is always trying to climb up there, and Gāros suppose that a star once wedded a clod of earth, and though later on it married another wife it comes down occasionally to visit its old love.[2]

Dhūmketa, 'smoke-bannered', is the term applied to a comet, but in the Atharvaveda it is an epithet of Mrityu or Death, and it is doubtful if it means a comet in this passage, one authority connecting it with the smoke of the funeral pyre.[3] It is naturally ominous. Fryer, writing of Newton's comet of 1680, says: 'and whether it be Meteor, Comet, or Exhalation, it is certainly ominous; and since they disclaim its Influence here, I wish it may not affect our Europe Kingdomes'.[4] The Persians showed much alarm at a comet in the time of Shāh 'Abbās, which the astronomers declared portended war to many nations, but not to Persia.[5] A comet which appeared in 1618 in the reign of Jahāngīr was said to have caused a terrible outbreak of plague, which began in the Panjab in 1618.[6] When two comets appeared in 1618 the English chaplain Terry says that they brought drought and famine in their train.[7] During the appearance of the comet of 1665 Aurangzeb drank only water and ate a little millet bread: 'this so much affected his

[1] Mills, 173. [2] P. N. Q. iii. 113; Playfair, 87. [3] Macdonell–Keith.
[4] *A New Account*, iii. 175. [5] Malcolm, *History*, i. 359.
[6] Elliot–Dowson, vi. 406 f.; Smith, *Oxford History*, 381 f. [7] Terry, 393.

health that he nearly died, for besides this he slept on the ground, with only a tiger's skin over him, and since that time he has never had perfect health '.[1] In 1705 a comet was visible for fifteen days: 'The Brahmans and astrologers found herein an occasion for talk, and they declared that these signs were demonstrations of Aurangzeb's approaching death and of devastation in many places in the Empire, together with the loss of the port of Surat.'[2] Hindus believe that comets are destructive to 'moustache-wearers', or men, if its tail points downwards, and to 'tail-wearers', or animals, if its tail is upwards.[3]

Aerolites are kept as emblems of the god in Saiva temples, like one which fell in Bengal in 1880, and it is now deified under the title of Adbhutanātha, 'the miraculous god'.[4] Gāros swear by meteoric stones, saying, 'May Goera, god of lightning, kill me with one of these if I have lied', and the strongest oath of the Kabui Nāgas is taken on such a stone.[5]

Hindus call the rainbow the bow of Rāma or of Indra, Musalmāns that of Bāba Adam or Father Adam. Among the Kols no trace of serpent worship has been found unless it be hidden in their name for the rainbow, Lūrbeng, 'a serpent'.[6] Pathāns think that if you want to change your sex all you have to do is to go and roll underneath a rainbow.[7] In the Panjab it is called 'the swing', 'the Old Woman's swing', or the swing of Bībī Bāī, wife of the Saint Sakhi Sarwar.[8] Hindus think it is the fume of a great serpent hidden in the ground, who, himself invisible, vomits the fume through a hole in the ground, while the Angāmi Nāgas declare that whoever approaches the foot of a rainbow will be slain by its spirit.[9]

The cults of Mother Earth and their development cannot be described here in detail.[10] In Vedic belief and ritual goddesses play only a subordinate part, as compared with their influence in Dravidian mythology, in which the recognition of Mother Right, as also among Gāros and Kochs of Eastern India, may have led to their development. Prithivi, the impersonation of

[1] Tavernier, i. 381. [2] Manucci, iv. 247. [3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 405.
[4] *A. S. R.* xvi. 32. [5] Playfair, 75; Hodson, 111. [6] Dalton, 177.
[7] Bray, *C. R.* 67. [8] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 133.
[9] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 35; Hutton, *Angami*, 251.
[10] See Crooke, 'The Cults of the Mother Goddesses in India', *Folk-lore*, xxx. 282 ff.

the widely extended Plains, does appear in the Veda, but 'the Earth herself makes no remarkable figure; she is, indeed, deified, at least partially, is addressed as Mother and substance of all things; is formally, in company with the Sky, invoked to grant blessings; yet this never advanced further than a lively personation might go'.[1] The inference is that the recognition of Mother Earth arose in the Vedic age when agriculture was combined with pastoral life, and not fully developed until the Aryans amalgamated with the tribes whom they found in occupation of Northern India.

Mother Earth is now designated Dharti, Dharani, Dharitri, the upholder of the human, animal, and vegetable life which rests on her surface. As a village godling she is generally aniconic beçause she is believed to be everywhere present in the ground, or she dwells in a pile of rude stones or pottery collected under the sacred village tree. Her shrine is often in charge of women, prime agents of fertility, or of a menial priest, a member of one of the old tribes who are supposed to understand how to control and conciliate her, not of a Brahman, and her offering is usually grain or fruit laid on her stone or milk poured over it. The pious man asks her forgiveness before he lays his foot on her when he rises in the morning. When a cow or buffalo is bought, or when she first gives milk after calving, the first five streams of her milk are allowed to fall on the ground, and at every milking-time the first stream is treated in the same way. When medicine is taken a few drops are sprinkled, and this, as in the case of firstfruits, is believed to free the whole from taboo.

The Orāon farmer, before transplanting his rice seedlings, makes a libation of rice beer on the ground and prays to Dharti Māi, 'O Mother Earth! may we have plenty of rain and bumper crops! Here is a drink offering to thee!'[2] In the same spirit the Kharwārs of Mirzapur say, 'O Mother Earth! Keep in prosperity and protect the ploughman and his oxen!' and in the Panjab the Karnāl farmer says, 'Keep our rulers and bankers contented! Grant us plentiful yield, so that we pay our revenue and satisfy our banker!' In the Veda she is invoked

[1] Whitney, 32; Fergusson–Burgess, 409 note.
[2] Sarat Chandra Roy, 142.

to guard the soul of the dead whose body is entrusted to her, and the Raūls of Poona when they bury their dead say, 'O Mother Earth! We make this body over to thee in the presence of the Gods Brahmā and Vishnu, who are our witnesses', where the primitive ritual has been worked over by Brahmanism.[1] In many cases of burial a copper coin is dropped into the grave as a propitiation to avert the death taboo or to avoid the danger of disturbing the Earth spirit, and before the foundation of a house or temple is laid water is sprinkled on the place, flowers are strewn over it, and a copper or silver coin, coral, a pearl, a betel-nut, a red cotton-thread, some moss and blades of sacred grass are put in a copper pot which is buried close by.[2]

Many taboos are connected with the earth. The dying man is removed from the house to save the building, its furniture, and occupants from pollution, and he is laid on the ground, some pieces of sacred grass being placed under him to guard him from the chthonic spirits. It is only a few tribes, like Bhīls, who allow a man to die in his bed, because the same fate is likely to overtake any one occupying it, and the soul released from the body in mid-air does not quickly find its rest.[3] No Kunbi will sleep on the bare ground, probably because the dying are laid on it.[4] Persons under taboo or as a mark of penitence sleep on the ground. The ancient Hindu ritual prescribed that after a man had brought his bride home the pair should sleep on the ground for three days.[5] The Bhandāri Khatris of the Panjab make a mother after child-birth sleep on the ground, and seven flowers of sacred trees are buried under her pillow as a protection.[6] Worshippers of the Saint Sultān Sakhi Sarwar sleep on the ground as part of the ritual, and the Mahaut or Abbot of the shrine of the Saint Zinda Kalyāna sleeps on the ground or on a square bed of grass laid between four posts on the earth.[7] For eleven days after a death mourners, male and female, sleep on the ground as the Pāndavas are said to have done after the death of Pāndu.[8] To commemorate the loss of

[1] Rigveda, x. 18; Atharvaveda, xviii. 2, 4; *B. G.* xviii, part i, 361.
[2] *B. G.* ix, part i, 404.
[3] Russell, *Nimār Gaz.* i. 61, 84; *ibid.*, *T. C.* iv. 74; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 863.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 44.
[5] Grihya Sutras, *S. B. E.* i. 357, ii. 267.
[6] Rose, *op. cit.* ii. 517.
[7] Rose, *C. R.* i. 118; *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 59.
[8] *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 121.

Chitor, Rānā Partāp Singh vowed that he and his successors should sleep on straw: 'though his descendant eats off gold and silver and sleeps on a bed, he places leaves beneath the one and straw under the other'.[1]

From the aniconic stage Mother Earth becomes anthropomorphized. Sītā, consort of Rāma and heroine of the Rāmāyana epic, is an instance of a manifestation of Mother Earth being raised to divine honour. In the Rigveda she is still the personified furrow, and later a godling of the ploughed field, wife of the rain-god. Even in the Rāmāyana she is said to have risen from the furrow which her adoptive father Janaka was ploughing, and in the end she disappears into the arms of Mother Earth.[2] In the same way the five Mahāsu brethren in the Panjab hills appeared with their mother out of a furrow.[3] The case of Balarāma, 'the strong Rāma', is in the same class, being an incarnation of the chthonic snake Sesha or Ananta, and called Halabhrit, 'the plough-bearer', who is also a god of harvest.[4] In the lower culture it is believed in Bengal that at the first fall of the rains in June–July Mother Earth, in order to prepare herself for her fertilizing work, menstruates. During this time ploughing, sowing, and other farm work ceases, women abstain from eating rice, and when the pollution ceases the goddess is purified: a stone is fixed in the ground to represent her, the top of which is smeared with vermilion, a mark of an earlier blood sacrifice, the housewife bathes it with turmeric water, and milk and flowers are offered to it.[5] In the Panjab she sleeps for a week in each month, and during this time no farm work is done, with this concession that if any work has been inadvertently begun before the period it may be finished.[6] In the Deccan after the Naurātri, the nine days' feast of the Mother goddess in September–October, her temple is closed from the 10th to the full-moon day while she rests and refreshes herself. Many people vow to live during this rest-time of the Mother north of the Godavari river, the southern boundary marking off the land of the Aryan from that of the Dravidian.[7]

[1] Tod, i. 387; A. K. Forbes, 307.
[2] Macdonell–Keith, ii. 451; *E. R. E.* x. 576; Barth, 176 f.
[3] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 304.
[4] Barth, 173; *J. R. A. S.* 1907, pp. 961 f.
[5] Gait, *C. R.* i. 189.
[6] *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 172; *P. N. Q.* ii. 205.
[7] *B. G.* xx. 444; Underhill, 34.

After her annual rest the goddess must be awakened. The Gāro priest at sowing time invokes Rohīmi, 'Mother of Rice', and striking the earth with a chopper-handle reminds her that as certain flowers have now blossomed in the jungle it is now time for her to preside over the sowing of the crop of which she is the mother.[1] According to General Dalton, at the Orāon festival held in July about the time when the rice is transplanted, the girls used to pat the earth to render her fertile, but it has been pointed out that this fertilization is the function of men, not of women, and it is the young men who carry palm-leaf fans or yak-tail whisks which they wave over the earth, as if coaxing her to awake and bear abundant crops; women are not allowed to plough or sow, but they may transplant the rice seedlings after they have been grown by the men, because it is their business to tend them as they do their own babies, a good example of sympathetic magic.[2]

Among tribes that practise the inhumation of the dead the Earth Mother is apt to assume a chthonic, malignant character. The link between the benign and malevolent spirit is the snake which lives above and beneath the earth, is dreaded for its destructive power or venerated as the representative of the household spirits. In Bundelkhand certain snakes known as Bhiarāni, said to mean 'earth-dwellers', are recognized as forms of Devi, the Mother goddess; coco-nuts are offered to them by priests drawn from the menial castes, while a Brahman generally lives close by and receives a share of the offerings—a good example of the combination of Brahmanism and Animism.[3] The chthonic cult of the Earth Mother is illustrated by the custom of burying the whole or part of an annual sacrificial victim in the ground. When Dhangars offer a goat to their Kuldevi or family godling, the head of the victim is buried under her shrine inside the house, and the rest of the meat is reserved for the use of members of the family; Basors sacrifice a pig in the name of a dead man, cut off the legs and bury the trunk in the courtyard, believing that this prevents the ghost from giving trouble; when the Kolis of the Deccan sacrifice a goat to Satvāi, the birth godling, its head is buried in front of her

[1] Playfair, 93. [2] Dalton, 198; Sarat Chandra Roy, 320.
[3] Luard, *C. R.* i. 75.

shrine.[1] All this corroborates the theory that many of the family, tribal, or disease godlings are manifestations of the primal Mother Earth.

Her functions as patroness of fertility are well marked. Among many low castes at their weddings it is the custom of the women to fetch from the village clay-pit the Matmangara or 'lucky earth'; it is brought home, and with it the fireplace at which food is cooked for the wedding feast is built. The women are accompanied by a low-caste Chamār or leather-dresser, who acts as drummer, and when the earth has been collected his drum is worshipped.[2] The holiness of earth used in peasant rites is increased by various circumstances. In Poona seven kinds are specially valued: that from the gate of a raja's palace, from a hill, from under the foot of an elephant or horse, from a place where four roads meet, from under the sacred Vāla tree (*Andropogon muricatum*). After an elephant has passed through a village little children may be seen patting the impress of its footprints in the dust, and at Thāna, when a woman goes out holding her baby astride on her hip, if she cannot get lamp-black to rub between its eyes to avert the Evil Eye, she takes the dust from her left foot and rubs it on the child's forehead.[3] Earth taken from the graves of Musalmān saints is valued as a remedy; Hindu troopers at the crisis of a battle often send their grooms to fetch earth and throw it over their heads; bathers in the Ganges and other rivers smear the mud over their bodies, and it is rubbed on the dying.

Special worship of the earth appears in many peasant rites. In Hoshangabad when the sowing is done the event is celebrated by the Machhandri or 'rat' worship, a magical rite intended to promote fertility.

'Every cultivator does the worship himself, with his family, servants, &c.; no Brahman need join in it. At the edge of one of his fields intended for the spring harvest, he puts up a little semicircle or three-sided wall of clods about a foot high, meant to represent a hut. This is covered with green Kāns grass (*Saccharum spontaneum*), to represent thatch. At the two ends of the hut two posts of Palāsa wood (*Butea frondosa*) are erected,

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 483; Crooke, *T. C.* i. 226; *B. G.* xviii, part i, 293.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 77; Briggs, 77; Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 488.
[3] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 141 note; Campbell, *Notes*, 79.

with leaves round the heads like those which are put up at marriage. They are tied to the thatch with red thread. In the centre of this little house, which is the temple of Machhandri or Mother Earth, a little fire is made, and milk is placed on it to boil in a tiny earthen pot. It is allowed to boil over as a sign of abundance. While this is going on the ploughmen, who are all collected in a field, drive their bullocks at a trot, striking them wildly; it is the end of the year's labour for the cattle. The cultivator meanwhile offers a little rice, molasses and saffron to Machhandri, and then makes too tiny holes to represent granaries; he drops a few grains in and covers them over; this is a symbol of prayer, that his granary may be filled from the produce of the land. Then he puts a little saffron on the foreheads of the ploughmen and the bullocks, and ties a red thread round the horns of the cattle. The animals are then let go, and the ploughmen run off at full speed across country, scattering wheat boiled whole as a sign of abundance.'[1]

This ritual is an instructive example of sympathetic magic.

In the case of sacrifices to Mother Earth it may be noted that the meat meal may not be eaten by married women; males or unmarried girls, who impersonate the goddess, and in some cases males alone may eat it.

Earthquakes are necessarily ominous, and they are accounted for in many ways. The common Hindu explanation is that Varāha, the boar incarnation of Vishnu, who supports the earth, is changing his burden from one tusk to the other, or, as some say, the great bull or elephant that upholds the earth is restless and relieves his fatigue in the same way. On the North-West Frontier it is said that to punish the sins of mankind a scorpion stings the bull on whose horns the earth rests, on which he stretches himself and then comes the earthquake.[2] Others say that earthquakes are due to a shivering ague fit in the centre of the earth, and they explain the few occurrences of them in the Panjab to the abundance of wells which act as safety-valves to the underground forces.[3] Gāros think that the earth is a square flat body, suspended from the sky by four ropes, one at each corner. On each rope a squirrel sits and tries to bite through it, but four blind men armed with bamboos guard the rope and then the earth begins to shake. Or they

[1] Elliott, *Settlement Report*, 125.
[2] Latimer, i. 98.
[3] *P. N. Q.* iii. 42.

think that the earth is supported by four legs like those of a table, and that when a mouse runs up one of them the earth moves.[1] When an earthquake begins Meitheis shout out 'Fish and Rice!' in the hope that they may save their food supplies from the demon as he shakes the earth.[2]

Thunder and lightning are equally ominous. The spirit of Yama, the first man, who first trod the path of death and became lord of the dead, came from Heaven in a thunderbolt. When lightning flashes in a clear sky it is specially ominous.[3] Indra, god of the firmament and of the rain, is naturally connected with storms, and his Vajra or Dorje is represented on Buddhist shrines in Nepāl and other parts of the lower Himalaya.[4] Thunder is his voice, or it is caused when he is playing tip-cat in the sky. Or thunder comes when Bhagwān, the Almighty, is racing his chariot in the heavens. Lightning is a little girl whom the wicked Raja Kansa tried to kill, but she flew away to the skies and became Bijli or lightning. Lushais think that a big lizard climbs a high tree and shouts defiance at the sky god, who hurls his axe at the impudent beast, and this causes lightning.[5] A tribe in the lower Himalaya is said to have become notorious for their filthy habits because they believed that if they cleaned their cooking vessels with clay a thunder-storm would occur, and so they adopted the custom of using their clothing for this purpose.[6] Kāfir clans are believed to be semi-divine because one day in the sky a father blacksmith said to his son, 'Bring me some fire', and as the lad was obeying the order he fell down to earth through a slit in the sky and became their ancestor.[7] The eastern Tibetans believe that marmots burrowing in the earth disturb the Nāgas or dragons, thus causing thunder-storms, and no one dares to harm these animals.[8] The Gāro deity Goera causes thunder and lightning, and if he strikes a tree sacrifice must be offered to him lest he may injure their homes.[9] Kabui Nāgas say that thunder and lightning are caused by the flash and clang of the bracelets on the arm of a girl who

[1] Playfair, 88. [2] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 120 f. [3] Somadeva, ii. 446.
[4] Grünwedel, 87 ff.; Oldham, ii. 200 f.; Hooker, 120; Waddell, *B. T.*, 298, 341; *E. R. E.* xii. 196.
[5] *Folk-lore*, xx. 395. [6] Sherring, *Mem. A. S. A.* 116.
[7] Robertson, 161. [8] Waddell, *Among the Himalayas*, 219.
[9] Playfair, 81; Endle, 70.

dances in the heavens, as she danced on earth, for joy at the coming of the rain, and others suppose that an angry deity is brandishing his dao knife and stamping in anger on the ground.[1] Gonds promote the chastity of their girls by believing that if one of them while immature get a child it is in danger of being struck by lightning, and to avoid this a white cock is offered to the lightning during the month of Asārh (June–July) following the birth, a prayer being made that it will accept this sacrifice in lieu of the child's life.[2] It is also believed that a child born by the foot presentation is specially liable to be struck by lightning. In the Central Provinces the remedy is to give it water to drink in which a Chamār carrier has dipped his shoe, and the Orāons to protect themselves wear bracelets of iron which have been exposed in the open air during an eclipse of the sun or moon.[3] It is a general rule to enforce silence during a thunder-storm lest the attention of the demon may be attracted, to mutter charms and fling axes and knives outside to scare him. If a first-born son leans against anything during a storm, he is likely to be struck by lightning.

In India as elsewhere water is the prime source of fertility. In Indian art the representations of an elephant or elephants pouring water from their trunks on Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity, is found in Buddhist as well as later art, and is the earliest example in Indian sculpture of worship being paid to any being, divine or human.[4] It is probably a rain charm. Hence water is often used in marriage rites. In Bombay the rite known as Dharē, 'a stream', is performed by pouring water over the hands of the pair, a custom also used to confirm other gifts.[5] The Munda bride and bridegroom are doused with water brought in pitchers by five maidens; among Raj-bansis in Bengal if a man who wishes to marry has not been able to provide the cost of the feast, he sprinkles water over the girl and they become man and wife; in Sambalpur before a marriage married women of the bridegroom's household go out at night and fill a brass pot with water, take it to seven

[1] Hodson, 126, 138.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 87.
[3] Martin, i. 158; Sarat Chandra Roy, 101.
[4] Wilkins, *Hindu Mythology*, 108; *E. R. E.* vii. 215; Fergusson–Burgess, 131, 434, 437, 458; Grünwedel, 39; *J. R. A. S.* 1918, p. 531.
[5] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 55.

houses and ask the owners to exchange some water for that in the pot; the water, which has thus become a mixture from seven houses, is used to bathe the bridegroom, who is thus purged of his unmarried state.[1] Water, and particularly running water, owes its motion to an indwelling spirit, and it is possibly the danger of offending this spirit which accounts for the taboo that prevents certain persons at certain times from crossing running water. A Nāgar Brahman woman when pregnant must not bathe in a flowing stream, must not cross such water, and from the fifth month of pregnancy till the child is a month and a half old she must not cross a river.[2] After a birth Khasi parents must not cross a stream or wash their clothes until they have propitiated the spirit; a Halba or Kunbi woman, when pregnant, must not cross a river lest she may suffer a miscarriage—apparently a piece of sympathetic magic; as the river flows so may flow away the fruit of her womb; during her courses a Pardhi woman must not cross a river or even sit in a boat, and when a bride has to cross a river she must invoke the boat to carry her safely, and thank Indra when she reaches the other bank.[3] The Magh bride and bridegroom in Bengal eat together, and the food remaining uneaten is kept for seven days in a covered vessel, during which time the pair may not leave the village or cross running water; if maggots are found in the vessel, the marriage will prove fertile.[4] In these cases the idea apparently is that the approach of persons in a state of crisis, taboo, or pollution may offend the spirit.

Worship of the sea, unknown to the tribes of the interior during the Vedic period,[5] is common on the coast. At Baroda the sea is worshipped by all high-caste Hindus at every Amāvas or new-moon night, particularly if it falls on Monday, when the waters of 999 rivers are supposed to be brought by the spring tides, and during the unlucky intercalary month it is a wise precaution to purify oneself by bathing.[6] In parts of Kāthiāwār a fire is lighted on the sea-shore, butter is thrown into it, and milk and sugar are poured into the sea. The fishing caste, particu-

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, *Oraons*, 450; O'Malley, i. 315, 327.
[2] Stevenson, *Rites*, 114 f.
[3] Gurdon, 126 f.; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 197, iv. 69, 362; *J. A. S. B.* iii. 332 f.
[4] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 32.
[5] Macdonell–Keith, ii. 431 ff.
[6] Desai, *C. R.* i. 66.

larly at the end of the monsoon when fishing craft put out to sea, pour milk, spirits, flowers, and coco-nuts into the sea.[1] Their festival at the close of the stormy weather is generally known as the Nārali-purnima, or coco-nut festival, held at the full moon of Sāvan or August, when people go to the shore, offer coco-nuts, and have their foreheads marked with red by a Brahman.[2] Koli women on the Bombay coast wear glass bangles only on the left wrist, because on their wedding day the right-arm bangles are taken off and thrown into the sea to win its favour for their husbands.[3]

Tradition names seven sacred rivers, usually enumerated as follows: Ganga, the Ganges; Yamuna, the Jumna; Sarasvati; Vitasta, the Hydaspes or Jhelum; Saraya, Sargu, or Ghāgra; Gomati, Gūmti; Gandaki, Gandak, but the names vary and the lists omit the sacred rivers farther south, like the Narbada and Godavari, which were not within the knowledge of the Indo-Aryans. The Sapta-Sindhavat or seven rivers are often mentioned in the Veda, but the enumeration varies, and the number seven was probably selected as lucky, without any special application; they are at the present day invoked as givers of fertility at marriage, and are represented by seven marks of vermilion impressed on the house-walls.[4]

The most sacred river in Northern India is Ganga, 'the goer', the Ganges. She is mentioned only twice in the Rigveda, and the respect for her dates from the time when the Indo-Aryans moved eastward from the Panjab. She is worshipped at many temples along her banks, and her image appears in the cave temples, where she and Jumna guard the entrance; in other words, she is on her way to rise from being a godling to a god.[5] The pollution of her waters is a serious outrage; pilgrims crowd to her at places like Hardwār, Prayāg or Allahabad, and Benares. The ashes of the dead are conveyed to her and the dying are carried to her banks. Bathing in her waters brings purification from sin and many temporal blessings, and her water is carried home by pilgrims, poured over the married pair to give them fertility, and administered to the sick and dying.[6] It was

[1] *B. G.* ix, part i, 349.
[2] *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 94; Balaji Sitaram Kothari, 28 ff.
[3] *B. G.* xi. 69.
[4] Macdonell–Keith, ii. 424; *B. G.* ix, part i, 41.
[5] *J. R. A. S.* 1914, p. 333.
[6] For details see *E. R. E.* vi. 177 ff.

predicted that her sanctity would cease in 1895 and that the Narbada would take her place, but, needless to say, the prophecy has not been fulfilled. Other rivers, like the Tuima of the Tipāras of Bengal, which is worshipped by stretching a string from her shrine to the nearest bathing-place, are now claiming to share the waters of the Ganges through some underground passage and to be identified with her.[1] The chief bathing fairs, as has been already said, are held when Jupiter, at periods of twelve years, enters the sign of Aquarius. The Ganges is specially holy at places where her stream turns northward; the Jumna where she flows westward; the Payoshni or Pūrna of Berar westward; the Godavari southward.[2] A legend of incest, of Yama and his sister Yami or Yamuna who gave her name to the Jumna, the fact that she is supposed to have never been purified by the marriage rite, and the supposed indigestibility of her water, have combined with the absence of any holy place of the first rank on her banks save Mathura to render her less sacred than the Ganges.[3] But she is reverenced in connexion with the Krishna cultus, and the Bhatias of Bombay who are his votaries bring water from Mathura and Gokul, keep it for years, and give a drop to friends and the dying.[4] The junctions of two sacred rivers are held specially holy: that of Ganges–Jumna at Prayāg, presided over by a special deity, Veni Mādhava; Gandak–Ganges at Sonpur; Or–Narbada at Chandod, which, if the Ganges gives place to the Narbada, would become a second Benares.[5] In the Himalaya cairns are often raised at river junctions, and Siva, as a god of fertility, presides over such places.[6]

Local legends attest the sanctity of many minor streams. When Bhīls return from a foray they offer a share of their booty to the Mahi, oaths are taken in her name, and she is able to cleanse even an unfaithful wife.[7] The Lohānas worship Darya Pir, the spirit of the Indus, who once saved them from their enemies.[8] The sacred portion of the Phalgu is said to flow occasionally with milk, though Buchanan was not so fortunate as to meet any one who professed to have seen the miracle, and

1 Gait, *C. R.* Bengal, i. 186 f.
2 *B. G.* xvi. 527.
3 Barth, 28; *E. R. E.* vii. 614.
4 Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 142.
5 *B. G.* vii. 500.
6 Tod, i. 18, ii. 704.
7 Luard, *Eth. Surv.* 74.
8 *B. G.* v. 55.

the same story is told of the Sipra at Ujjain.[1] The Narbada, marking the ancient frontier between Hindustan and the Deccan, enjoys great sanctity, and the Ganges herself in the form of a black cow comes to her to bathe once a year. She was once wooed by the river Son, who was beguiled by the Johila, a rival stream, and in her rage the Narbada forced her way westward to the Arabian Sea, while the Son flows eastward and joins the Ganges—an obviously aetiological explanation of the fact that the head-waters of Son and Narbada are parted by the watershed.[2] The great eastern river, the Brahmaputra, 'Son of Brahmā', is for mythological and other reasons, particularly as it was beyond the Brahmanical pale, regarded as impure, except at the annual Asokashtami festival in the month of Chait (March–April), when its waters become as cleansing as those of the Ganges herself.[3]

It used to be the custom in Bengal for women disappointed in the hope of offspring to vow that if Ganga gave them two children they would cast one, usually the first-born, into the river, but such children were usually rescued and adopted by some relations or by a mendicant.[4] Even now Chamārs often vow to offer the first hair of a child to the Ganges, and sometimes even cast the child into the river, leave it for a moment in the water, and snatch it out before any harm comes to it.[5]

In this connexion reference may be made to the custom of religious suicide at Sagar Island, the point where the Hugli, the most important channel of the river Ganges, reaches the sea. It was considered lucky that the suicide should be seized at once by a shark, because if he remained long in the water before being drowned his eternal happiness was believed to be imperilled.[6] The most ill-omened of all streams is the accursed Vaitarani, in the sense of 'crossing' or 'giving', now represented by the Baitarani of Cuttack.[7] It flows, a mass of blood and filth to the south, between earth and the kingdom of Yama, god of death, to which every soul must travel. But it may cling as it crosses to the tail of a cow presented to a Brahman at the time of death, an idea borrowed from the habit of cowherd boys

[1] Buchanan, i. 14; *Āīn-i-Akbari*, ii. 196.
[2] *Asiatic Researches*, vii. 102; Sleeman, *Rambles*, 146.
[3] Gupte, 211 ff.; *E. R. E.* ii. 135.
[4] Ward, ii. 214.
[5] Briggs, 62.
[6] Ward, ii. 314; Barth, 279.
[7] *I. G. I.* vi. 218 f.

clinging to the tails of their buffaloes as they cross rivers in Bengal. Another ill-omened stream is the Karamnāsa, 'destroyer of merit', a tributary of the Ganges, dividing the District of Mirzapur from that of Shahabad. The very touch of its water was believed to convey defilement, and passengers used to be conveyed across on men's backs until a pious banker built a bridge across it. The local legend tells that when the sage Visvāmitra collected water from all the holy rivers of the world it fell burdened by the sins of Satyavrata-Trisanku, who was degraded by the rival sage Vasishtha to become a Chandāl or outcast. Visvāmitra tried to help him to ascend to Heaven, but the only concession the angry gods could be induced to make was that he should hang downwards in the air, and the baneful moisture dropping from his body still pollutes the river.[1] According to another tale, the demon Rāvana, when besieged in Lanka, was offered release on condition that he would bring a lingam from Siva's mountain Kailās, without allowing it to touch the ground. But Varuna, a rival god, entered his belly and Rāvana was forced to drop the lingam, and the water which flowed from it formed the accursed Karamnāsa. The real explanation is that the river formed the boundary between the Kāsi tribe occupying the 'sin-destroying' Kāsi or Benares, while beyond them lived the Magadha and Anga tribes, beyond the pale of the Indo-Aryan holy land. Their country was imperfectly Brahmanized, and later on became the scene of the Kshatriya reaction against the Brahman, which ultimately led to the rise of Brahmanism. Hence the curse laid on the river which represents an historical fact.[2] Even now it is believed that a man dying on the north bank of the Ganges opposite Benares is likely to be reincarnated as an ass.

The worship of a river is addressed to the river itself, not to any deity supposed to abide in it or preside over it. Hence the cult of holy rivers is unsectarian. The value of a pilgrimage depends upon the inherent sanctity of the place and on the divine, purifying influence which emanates from it. The cult of rivers, again, is often associated with the supposed presence in them of dragons, snakes, or demons. Water sprites or ogres

[1] See *J. R. A. S.* 1913, pp. 885 ff., 1917, p. 39.
[2] *Cambridge Hist. of India*, i. 123; Macdonell–Keith, ii. 117 f.

constantly appear in the folk-tales, like Kāliya, 'the black one', the serpent-king of the Jumna whom Krishna slew, or Karkotaka, the water-demon of Nepāl.[1] In the Panjab Gaddis propitiate with offerings of food the Batāl, spirits of springs, wells, and rivers.[2] Gāros believe that most deep, still pools are occupied by the Bugarik, a lovely siren who devours men.[3] In the lower Himalaya bundles of rags and prayer-flags are hung on cane bridges and the trees near them to propitiate the local river-devil.[4] Many of these creatures, like the Gārdevi of Garhwāl, are the malevolent ghosts of persons who have met death by suicide, violence, or accident, haunting the places of their death, terrifying passers-by, often following them and occupying their houses; or the Būrna, 'the drowned', of the plains who drag bathers under the water.[5] The Meitheis tell a story of an evil spirit who once seized and drowned a queen in a river pool.[6] Such demons may catch even a man's shadow and drag him, and Oriental Narcissus, under water.[7] In Chamba the Jaljogini, or evil water-spirit, like the Aija or Jaldevata of the Deccan, casts spells on women and children and causes disease or death.[8] The Kols believe in Nāga-era who occupies wells, tanks, and stagnant water, the embodiment of malaria, and Garha-era, a water goddess, 'frequently and truly described as the cause of sickness, and propitiated with sacrifices to spare their victims'.[9] Such spirits sometimes appear in the form of animals, like Bhainsāsura, the buffalo demon, akin to Mahishāsura, with the same meaning, who gives its name to Mysore, the embodiment of death, like the black buffalo on which Yama, god of death, rides, which was slain by Durga, the life-protecting goddess. They often show themselves in the shape of a turban which clings to the fisherman's hook and increases in size as he tries to drag it ashore or pulls him into the water—all impersonations of the vague awe and mystery of dark, still water-pools. Hence there are special protectors of passengers at Ghāts or fords. In the Central Provinces he is known as Ghatoia Deo, 'deity of the river-crossing', and Dhīmar fishermen keep a

[1] *Jataka*, i. 25, 54; Growse, *Mathura*, 55; Oldfield, ii. 204.
[2] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 270. [3] Playfair, 116. [4] Waddell, *Himalayas*, 81.
[5] Atkinson, ii. 632; Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 286, 328. [6] Hodson, 124.
[7] Cf. Frazer, *Pausanias*, v. 159; *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 94.
[8] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 215; *B. G.* xviii, part i, 292. [9] Dalton, 188.

chicken in their boat to be offered to him when the crossing is dangerous, and Dhobi washermen make libations of spirit to him in June when the monsoon bursts and the rivers are in flood.[1] In the United Provinces the ford guardian is represented by Ghatauriya Bāba, 'father of the ford', said to be the ghost of a man drowned in crossing a river, and requiring propitiation.[2]

The occurrence of floods is often assigned to the action of demons. When a village is endangered by a flood the headman makes an offering of a coco-nut and a rupee to the flood demon, and in Gujarāt he adds a woman's robe, possibly the survival of a human sacrifice.[3] When the great Gohna flood occurred in 1894 at Hardwār the Brahmans threw milk, rice, and flowers into the Ganges and prayed to her to protect them. Coco-nuts are a favourite offering because from their shape they represent the head of a human victim.[4] Human sacrifices to rivers were, and are, not uncommon. In Jaintia the Khāsis used to offer two human victims yearly to the Kopili river which the Jaintias worshipped as a goddess, and, like the Kandh Meriah, the victims were allowed to take any food they pleased from the barns, and were then led to the sacrificial stone on the river bank and executed.[5] In the Central Provinces when a Kuramwār girl reached adolescence while single she was sacrificed to the river godling by being placed in a small hut on the river bank until a flood came and swept her away; now she is taken to the river, kept in a hut while offerings are made to the river godling, and though by this rite she is considered to be expelled from her caste, she may return and live in her village.[6]

Sometimes an animal is sacrificed, as in the remarkable case reported from Chamba, where a male buffalo, an appropriate offering to a water godling, is flung into the river Rāvi. The Raja gives the signal by throwing a coco-nut, holy grass, and flowers into the water, and then the buffalo is pushed into the flood. The fate of the victim is closely watched; if it is carried away and drowned, it is assumed that the offering is accepted;

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 507, 521.
[2] Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 292, iii. 98.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 350.
[4] *B. G.* xv, part i, 205, 354, 376; Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 323 note; Russell, *T. C.* i. 239.
[5] Gurdon, 103, 152.
[6] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 52 f.

if it crosses the river and succeeds in climbing up the opposite bank, this also is auspicious as the sins of the town are thus transferred across the river; but if it emerges from the water on the side where it was thrown in, evil is portended to the state, and it is kept, doing no work, until the next year when it is again offered, and so on year by year until it finally loses its life. Here we apparently have a combination of a river sacrifice and the transfer of sin by means of a scape-animal.[1] The practice of transferring evil by means of rafts is common, as among Lhota Nāgas, who make a miniature raft on which they put an egg, a little cotton-wool, and a live bird tied [illegible] the leg, and let it float downstream.[2] As these victims are devoted to the godling, it is dangerous to interfere with them, and hence any one who saves a drowning person, or saves him from the clutches of the water demon, is likely to suffer for his rashness.[3]

From these protecting godlings the transition to general deities of water is easy. Hindus have adopted, at least in name, from Musalmāns a water deity known as Khwāja Khidr or Khizr; or perhaps the Musalmān saint has been evolved from the local Animism. Much legend from the cycles of Alexander the Great, the Musalmān Zū-l-qarnain, 'he of the two horns', Elisha, Noah, Tammuz, Adonis, and Moses, has gathered round the Khwāja.[4] His cult is in the main an attempt by means of magic to pass away the sins or evils which menace his worshippers. This is effected by launching in a river little boats, each provided with a light and offerings. Hindu pilgrims at the Narbada launch a boat with black sails, which soon become white, a sign that the sins of the penitent have been carried away.[5] By another interpretation it is assumed that the spirit or ghost to whom the outbreak of epidemic disease is attributed is that of a dead ancestor or hero who dwells beyond the water, and that a message is thus sent by a route along which the soul of the dead has passed after death.[6] But it does not appear that this theory is held in Northern India. Such expulsion of evil by means of little boats or rafts is specially done at the Dīvāli,

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 135. [2] Mills, 125.
[3] Sarat Chandra Roy, *J. A. S. Bo.* iii. 253 ff.; *N. I. N. Q.* v. 187 ff.; *J. A. S. B.* 1893, no. 3; Sir Walter Scott, *The Pirate*, note 4.
[4] *E. R. E.* vii. 693 ff.; *Folk-lore*, xxviii. 279 ff.; Ja'far Sharīf, 38 f., 67, 135 f. [5] *B. G.* ii. 569. [6] *E. R. E.* xi. 473.

or feast of lights, at the new moon of Kārttik (October–November).[1]

Many saints or holy men are supposed to possess the power of changing the courses of rivers. A Rishi changed the course of the Sarju; Bhrigu, the sage, gave to one of his disciples the power to drag the Narbada after him by trailing his clothes behind his back, on condition that he did not look back, but he violated his taboo and the river did not move as far as he wished; a Khāsi tale tells how two goddesses changed the courses of the rivers.[2] Any one who has seen the remarkable changes in the courses of Indian rivers will understand the origin of stories such as these.

Wells, the main source of the water supply in the plains, naturally suggest many popular beliefs. Banjāra women will not drink from running streams or tanks, possibly because they believe them to be haunted, or from experience of the danger of using impure water gained in their nomadic life.[3] In the Panjab the sites of ruined wells in deserted cities are discovered by turning out a herd of goats to graze, as they will lie down in a circle round the buried well; or such wells are indicated in a dream.[4] Some castes like the Luniya salt-makers or certain Faqīrs in the eastern Panjab are said, like our water dousers, to be able to smell out where a spring is likely to be found, and they are called Sūnghnā or 'sniffers'; in Gujarāt the Od navvy caste, Kolis, Brahman ascetics, and all fatherless sons are credited with possessing this power.[5]

Many precautions are needed in digging wells. The work should begin on a Sunday, and on the previous night little bowls of water are placed round the selected site as a magical means of measuring the water supply. A circle is then made round the spot, and as they dig they leave one clod of earth till the last, called in the Panjab Khwājaji after the water saint, Khwāja Khizr, and this is worshipped and Brahmans are fed.[6] In the United Provinces a Pandit fixes the auspicious time for starting the work. The landowner worships Gauri, the Mother goddess, Ganesa, deity of luck, Seshanāga, the serpent which upholds

[1] *B. G.* ix, part i, 151; Gait, *C. R. Bengal*, i. 179.
[2] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 17; *B. G.* ii. 342 note; Gurdon, 178 f.
[3] Thurston, *T. C.* iv. 231.
[4] *P. N. Q.* i. 3, 15, 39, 88.
[5] *B. G.* ix, part i, 350.
[6] Cf. *N. I. N. Q.* v. 180.

the world, Mother Earth, the nine planets, and the spade used in cutting the first sod. When the spring is reached a lucky time is selected for fixing the wooden foundation of the masonry shaft. This is smeared with vermilion, and Raksha or protective threads are tied to it, and after it is lowered a stone or fire sacrifice is made and Brahmans are fed.[1] In Gujarāt when the spring is found a stone daubed with vermilion is fixed near the brink of the well to serve as an abode for the Water Mother.[2] Lhota Nāgas throw into the spring of a newly founded village a carnelian bead and pray that their young men and maidens may be strong.[3]

The well must be married before the water can be used for drinking or irrigation. In Bengal a wooden image in male form is made, and between it and Mother Earth the marriage rite is performed as a fertility charm.[4] But the more general practice is that before the water acquires fertilizing power the Sālagrāma, or anchorite representing Vishnu, is solemnly wedded to the holy basil plant or Tulasi (*Ocymum sanctum*) representing the garden which the well is intended to water. This is also done in the case of tanks, each of which has, or should have, a central pole representing the husband of the water spirit; for until the tank is wedded its water will not be sweet, it will only increase thirst and will cause disease, while the pole husband scares the evil spirits which haunt unmarried tanks.[5] The customary ritual of such marriages is that the relatives of the owner assemble as in the case of a marriage in the family, the owner personates the husband and a kinsman or kinswoman the wife, gifts are given to Brahmans, a feast is held in the garden, and thus the water acquires fertilizing power, and it may be used without danger.[6] Kalārs in the Central Provinces, before a wedding procession starts, perform a curious rite known as 'marrying the well'. The mother or aunt of the bridegroom goes to the well, sits with her legs dangling down inside it, and asks what the bridegroom will give her. He goes round the well seven times, and a piece of Kāns grass (*Saccharum spontaneum*) is thrown into it at each turn. Afterwards he promises her a

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 202.
[2] *B. G.* ix, part i, 350 f.
[3] Mills, 5.
[4] Gait, *C. R. Bengal*, i. 190.
[5] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 160.
[6] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 121 f., 143.

present and she returns home. By another account she pretends to be overcome by grief at the bridegroom's departure, and threatens to throw herself into the well unless he will give her something.[1] Kunbis in Bombay, before they water their fields from a well for the first time, throw rice and red powder into the water, lay a lamp fed with butter at the well's mouth, and offer the kernel of a coco-nut to the water spirit.[2] Many stories are told of cranky Faqīrs and other holy men cursing wells so that the water became brackish. In Khāndesh a tale is told of the water spirit being so offended because a well was built of old bricks, that the people were stricken with guinea-worm and left the village.[3] Many wells are efficacious in the cure of diseases like leprosy, barrenness, or debility, and in the Kaira District an old Rājput accidentally fell into a well and recovered his youthful strength, so that it has now become a place of pilgrimage.[4] At a well in Orissa the priests throw betel-nuts into the mud, barren women scramble for them, and those who find them have their desire for children soon gratified.[5] Water drawn from seven wells is specially useful in curing barrenness if a woman bathes in it at a place where four roads meet, but to make the charm effectual no one must see her bathing.[6] With the same object in Bombay the Brahmakshatri bride bathes in water drawn from seven wells.[7]

Wells are thus closely connected with marriage and child-birth. In Bengal Koiri and Kurmi women are purified after childbirth by marking with vermilion five spots on the coping of a well and drawing a jar of water.[8] A Munda woman purifies herself after child-birth by making with her left hand, which is used for impure purposes, vermilion marks on the wooden enclosure of a spring, and then drawing water.[9] In Bombay when a Bhābria woman marries a second time she goes next morning veiled to the well—the veiling implying that she is under taboo to draw water: then she unveils her face and thus relieves herself of the danger attending such a marriage.[10] In

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 308: compare the Pāsi rite, *ibid.* iv. 383.
[2] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 121.
[3] *B. G.* xii. 467.
[4] *Ibid.* iii. 172 f.
[5] Ball, 531.
[6] *P. N. Q.* ii. 166.
[7] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 211: on the connexion of wells with children see *Folk-lore*, xviii. 253 ff.
[8] Risley, *T. C.* i. 504, 535.
[9] Sarat Chandra Roy, 459.
[10] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 47.

Palamau at the Sārhūl feast held in May the whole village is purified, the village Baiga does sacrifice, every one helps to clean the village well and marks the platform with vermilion, but no one is allowed to draw water from it during the festival.[1]

Sacred wells abound throughout the country. Many of them, like one of the sacred Sikh tanks,[2] are supposed to have an underground connexion with the Ganges. Many, again, are associated with the wanderings of Rāma and Sītā. One at Monghyr is the reputed scene of Sītā's ordeal, when she proved her virtue by passing through the fire and a hot spring gushes out from the place. Others say that when it became necessary to fence it in to allow Europeans to bathe in it the water became so hot that no one would dare to touch it, so that precautions being unnecessary, the work of the infidels was abandoned'.[3] A famous well in the Panjab was produced by the Sikh Guru Govind Singh thrusting his spear into the ground.[4] The Manikarnika, 'jewel-eared', well at Benares was produced either by Vishnu, who dug it with his spear, or when Siva and his consort Pārvati were once seated above it her ear-ring fell into the water, and here also is the Gyān Bāpi or Gyān Kūp, 'the well of knowledge', which a Rishi dug with Siva's trident; now the god dwells in it and its water gives learning, like one in Kumaun, a draught from which given to a child who has drunk no other water makes him wise.[5] There is a well in Garhwāl in which bubbles appear when you say 'Siva! Siva!' but it answers the appeal to no other god, and the water of a well at Kashmīr at times becomes violently agitated and finally disappears, showing the muddy bed in which the forms of swords and spears appear when war is imminent, but when famine is coming corn-mills and rice-huskers are seen, graves and spades when cholera is on its way; in another the water generally has a violet tinge, but on the approach of cholera it turns black.[6] At Askot in the lower Himalaya there is an oracle which predicts the prospects of the harvest: if it fills to the brim the vessel into which the water falls there will be a good season, if it is only half full scarcity may be expected,

[1] Dehon, 144 f.
[2] Macauliffe, iii. 26.
[3] Buchanan, ii. 43 f., 196 ff.
[4] Macauliffe, ix. 61.
[5] M. Sherring, 53 f., 67 ff.; Greaves, 50, 80 f.; *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 124.
[6] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 108; Lawrence, 294, 296.

and if only a little water flows a drought may be anticipated.[1] In a well in the Baroda State the water increases every twelfth year, because at this time Mother Ganges purifies the souls of warriors killed at a neighbouring fort and licks the feet of the warrior Parasurāma, 'Rāma with the axe'.[2] Kāfirs point out magical pools in which, if any one comes too near, the water becomes visibly troubled, and if an arrow dipped in filth is shot at its surface a mighty torrent rushes out and inundates the country, a belief widely spread in the northern hills.[3]

Hot springs are usually attributed to gods or demons. Those in [illegible] are caused by a devil who brings disease unless she is propitiated. That at Unai in the Surat District was produced by a blow of Rāma's trident, or by his arrow when he wanted water to purify a host of Brahmans defiled by the slaughter of so many Rakshasa demons at Lanka, and on one day in the year the water which is ordinarily too hot to touch becomes so cool that pilgrims can bathe in it.[4] The rocks near the hot springs at Jamnotri are occupied by the twelve Rishis or holy men who followed Siva-Mahādeva from Lanka.[5]

Waterfalls, seen only by the people of the plains who visit the hilly tracts, are objects of awe and veneration. Mikirs believe that 'localities of an impressive kind, such as mountains, waterfalls, deep pools in rivers, great boulders, have each their *arnama*, or deity'.[6] The finest falls in India, those of Gersoppa, on the boundary of Mysore and Kanara, are regarded with awe.[7] Women who desire to be mothers lay bangles, ornaments, and cotton waist-strings at the waterfall caused by the river Chandraprabha hurling itself over the crest of the plateau into the Ganges valley. In the Central Provinces rivers are tenanted by sprites, known as the Sāt Bahini or 'Seven Sisters', who delight to play near waterfalls, holding up the water and then letting it drop.[8] In Garhwāl there is a waterfall known as Vasudhāra, 'treasure-holding', which if seen by an impure person ceases to flow.[9]

[1] Atkinson, ii. 797 f.
[2] *B. G.* vii. 587.
[3] Robertson, 433; Alberuni, *Chronology*, 235; *Āīn*, ii. 408; Biddulph, 95; Ghulam Muhammad, 112.
[4] Dalal, i. 16; *B. G.* ii. 333 f.
[5] Atkinson, iii. 38.
[6] Stack, 33.
[7] *B. G.* xv, part ii, 284 ff.; Rice, *Mysore*, ii. 305 f.
[8] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 399.
[9] Atkinson, iii. 26.

Many lakes are sacred and visited by pilgrims. One of the most famous is Manasarovar or Manasasarovar, 'created from the mind' of Brahmā, 'the holiest and most famous of the lakes of the world, the goal and pilgrimage of innumerable pious Hindus, a lake celebrated in the most ancient religious hymns and songs, and in its clear waters the ashes of Hindus find a grave as desirable and honoured as in the turbid waters of the Ganges'.[1] Pushkar, 'the lotus lake', in Rajputana is highly sacred to Rājputs, the subject of many legends, and on its banks is said erroneously to stand the only temple dedicated in India, to Brahmā.[2] The lake of Tara Tāram, in Amritsar District, 'the raft which carries men across the world's ocean', is believed to cure leprosy, and sufferers come to it from all parts of the country.[3] Many lakes, known as Rāmkund, 'Rāma's pool', the most holy being that at Nāsik, are those at which Rāma purified himself from the pollution of the blood of Rāvana, demon king of Lanka. The lake of Naini Tāl is sacred to Naini, one of the many forms of Devi, the Mother goddess, who has a temple there. Sākambhari, 'nourisher of herbage', another title of the goddess, converted a forest into a plain of silver and formed the salt lake of Sāmbhar, named after her, which is held in high honour by the Chauhān sept of Rājputs.[4] Every tank in the Central Provinces in which the lotus grows is tenanted by Purainha, the guardian deity of the plant.[5]

Some lakes, again, are connected with the Fairy Gift cycle of folk-tales, in which a fairy offers vessels or other things to some one who honours her, but the gift is lost by the greed of some selfish churl who fails to return them.[6] Such are the Taroba or Tadala lake in the Chanda District, that of Amnor in Elichpur, and many others.[7]

Many lakes are supposed to have palaces in their depths where fairies or the Nāga snake godlings hold their courts.[8] Pious Hindus still watch beneath the sea the ruined walls and palaces of Krishna's city Dwāraka, and admire its reflection in the glowing November sunsets.[9] The Shāhgarh lake in the Bareilly

[1] Sven Hedin, ii. 110 ff.; C. Sherring, 273; Atkinson, ii. 308 f.
[2] Tod. ii. 892. [3] *I. G. I.* xxiii. 252; Macauliffe, iii. 25.
[4] Tod, iii. 1449. [5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 400. [6] Hartland, *S. F.*, chap. vi.
[7] Grant, 48 f.; Begbie–Nelson, i. 389 f.; Lyall, *Gaz.* 148; Tod, ii. 772.
[8] Somadeva, ii. 149, 267; *Jataka*, iv. 281. [9] *B. G.* vii. 588.

District and many others are the scene of the pretty tale of the girl who went to draw water in an unbaked water-jar with a raw cotton thread. She sank into the water, but the gods in pity for her innocence saved her, so that she might learn by experience the evil of vanity and pride in riches.[1] A lake near Badarināth in the lower Himalaya is held sacred by the Bhotias who throw into it the ashes of the dead, believe that no bird can fly across it, and make offerings to its spirit, praying it to keep the passes open and aid them in their dangerous journeys.[2] One day a Brahman was passing the Mandkalla tank and saw a marriage party waiting for the wedding feast. They were unaccountably silent and motionless, and when they invited him to share in the meal he agreed with much hesitation, which was justified when he saw with horror the heads of the whole party fall off before his eyes, and all of them soon disappeared.[3] Brahmans say that any one who bathes in the Rinmochan or 'debt-removing' tank becomes free of debt.[4] Many tanks hold treasures in charge of a Yaksha, an attendant on Kuvera, god of wealth, but those who attempt to find it always fail in the search.

Bathing in some wells and tanks restores youth and virility. The classical case is that of Chyavana whose wife forced the Aswins or Dioskouroi to restore her husband's youth by directing him to bathe in a certain pool.[5] This story of the Fountain of Youth appears in many folk-tales. In one from Bengal a woman bathes in a tank and regains youth and beauty.[6] In Nepāl an ugly grass-cutter bathed in a tank and drank the water, whereupon he lost his ugliness.[7] In another version of the tale a Brahman keeps a monkey, who in gratitude gave him a heavenly fruit, and when the Brahman and his wife ate it they ceased to be liable to old age and disease.[8]

Rain is the prime need of the peasant, and many methods are adopted to procure it.

The Vedic rain-god is Indra who enters into the fray with

[1] Moens, 20; Führer, 26; *B. G.* v. 74, xiv. 337; Temple, *Legends*, i 39; Oppert, 467 note.
[2] Atkinson, iii. 27. [3] *A. S. R.* iv. 192. [4] *Ibid.* xiv. .
[5] Muir, v. 250 ff.; Macdonell-Keith, i. 265.
[6] Lal Behari Day, 281 f. [7] D. Wright, 134 ff.
[8] Somadeva, ii. 596.

Vritra, 'the obstructer', the demon of drought, or with Ahi, the demon who disperses the rain clouds.[1] Though he has now lost much of his dignity and Tulasidās calls him 'a vile wretch', he still retains his popularity among Buddhists. The Koch and Rājbansis of Bengal identify their godling, Hudum Deo, with him, and he appears in androgynous form, represented by two figures, male and female, made of cow-dung. When drought is feared women offer to him curds, parched rice, and molasses, dance round him all night, perform many obscene rites, and abuse Indra in the hope of compelling him to send rain.[2] The Bhīls, a jungle tribe in Khandesh, at their festival in honour of Indra, plant a branch of the Kadamb tree (*Nauclea parvifolia*) in front of the headman's house, smear it with vermilion, offer a goat and a chicken, dance all night, and in the morning throw the branch into water as a rain-charm.[3] The Meitheis are now beginning to identify their sky god, Soravel, with Indra.[4]

Bhīma or Bhimsen, one of the Pāndava princes, a burly warrior known for his strength and enormous appetite, has now become the chief rain-god in the Central Provinces. Gonds celebrate a festival in his honour at the close of the monsoon, when two poles are erected and boys with the aid of a rope climb to the top and slide down—possibly a magical device to promote the sprinkling of the crops and the fall of the rain; Parjas, when rain is wanted, fix a piece of wood in the ground, call it Bhimsen, King of the Clouds, pour water on it as a charm, and pray for rain.[5]

Sometimes the rain is supposed to be shut up in certain pits from which it can be released. Near the Ramesvar temple at Kolaba there are three of these pits: the fire-pit, the wind-pit, and the rain-pit; and when sunshine, wind, or rain fails, the appropriate pit is opened.[6]

When rain is wanted Bhīls send their women and girls with bows and arrows, dancing and singing, to capture a bullock belonging to a neighbouring village as a sacrifice to the goddess Kāli. The headman of the village on which the attack is made seldom objects, probably because he looks forward to

[1] Macdonell, *V. M.* 58 ff. [2] Gait, *C. R.* Bengal, i. 190 f.
[3] *B. G.* xii. 200. [4] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 111. [5] Hislop, 18; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 377.
[6] *B. G.* xi. 309; cf. Harrison, *Prolegomena*, 68; Frazer, *G. B.*, 'The Magic Art', i. 322 f.

seize one belonging to his assailants; but if he does resist, the women abuse and threaten him.[1]

Nudity is essential in many magical rites and appears prominently in rain magic. The possible explanation of the custom is that clothing pollutes the magician, and its absence indicates absolute submission to the will of the higher Powers.[2] Many cases are on record of high-caste women going to the fields in time of drought at night and stripping themselves naked. Two of them are yoked to a plough, while a third holds the handles and pretence at ploughing is made, the driver shouting, 'O Mother Earth, bring parched grain, water and chaff! Our bellies are bursting from hunger and thirst!' Hearing this the landlord approaches, and standing at a distance lays grain, water, and chaff in the field, on which the women dress and go home. The narrator, a native gentleman, ends his account by: 'By the grace of God the weather changed almost immediately, and we had a good shower.'[3] In time of drought the Meitheis, headed by their Raja, 'strip themselves of all their clothes and stand in the broadways of Imphil cursing one another to the full extent of an expressive language.[4] The women at night gather in a field outside the town, strip themselves and throw the dhān [paddy-pounders] into a neighbouring pool in the river and make their way home by by-ways. Of course there is a legend of a Peeping Tom, for whose outrage on decency the country went rainless for a whole year. To some Maiba [priest] the wicked act was revealed in a dream, and then justice was done and the country saved.'[5] The popular explanation of such practices is that they are such a subversion of the natural order of things that Indra or some rain godling is shamed or moved to pity and grants the needed rain. But this can hardly be accepted as the real motive underlying the ritual. Water being one of the main sources of fertility, and therefore used in the marriage rite, we may conjecture that the performers in this magical rite of rain-making divest themselves of their clothing in the hope that the desired rain will fertilize them, and

[1] *B. G.* iii. 221.
[2] W. Crooke, 'Nudity in India in Custom and Ritual', *J. R. A. I.* xlix. 237 ff.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 210, v. 136.
[4] On the effect of abuse or cursing see p. 36, *supra*.
[5] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 108.

that from them fertility will be communicated to the thirsty crops.[1]

The Raja, as Sir James Frazer has shown,[2] is often held responsible for the weather and for the fertility of his subjects, their cattle and crops. 'In that country,' says Manu, 'where the King avoids taking the property of mortal sinners, men are born in due time and are long-lived. And the crops of the husbandmen spring up, each as it was sown, and the children die not, and no misshaped offspring is born.[3] Sometimes the Raja coerces the local godlings to provide rain. In the Kangra District there are many village deities subject to the [illegible]ja whose ancestors endowed them with plots of [illegible]ree land. When rain is wanted the Raja orders them to provide it, and if it happens to fall within the time allowed, so much the better for them; if not, they are each fined and the proceeds go into the Raja's treasury.[4] Sometimes, as in the Meithei case already quoted, the Raja takes personal action. In Baluchistan in time of drought the Khan doffs his fine clothes, and wearing the woollen overcoat of the peasant, drives a yoke of oxen across a rain-crop field.[5] At Ahmadabad the Nagar Seth or mayor of the city in seasons of drought makes a solemn circuit of the city walls, pouring out milk to propitiate Indra.[6]

Sham or mock fights, symbolizing the conflict between good and evil spirits, are sometimes used in rain magic. They influence fertility as in the case of Lhota Nāgas, among whom when the village Bachelors' Hall is being rebuilt the young women try to force their way in and the young men resist them, the struggle being supposed to increase the fertility of the women who engage in it.[7] In times of drought Brāhūi women of the nomad camps go, unseen by the men, to some lonely place, throw back their head-dresses, gird their waists, and belabour one another with thorny branches till blood begins to flow, which ensures a fall of rain; the flagellation probably acting as a purification from evil spirits, or they play children's games

[1] For a similar rite, known in Bihar as Har-parauri, 'plough-nourishing', see *J. R. A. S.* 1897, pp. 471 ff., 1898, pp. 194 ff.

[2] *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 366 ff.

[3] *Laws*, ix. 246–7.

[4] *P. N. Q.* ii. 41: compare the mode by which the Chinese Government deals with its gods, Lyall, *A. S.* ii. 119 ff.

[5] Bray, *C. R.* i. 65.

[6] *B. G.* iv. 114, 302.

[7] Mills, 28.

in which a boy dressed like an old man is dragged shouting through the camp with bells jingling from his waist, and at each house the goodman offers him money or grain. Mr. Bray suggests that the shouting of the boy and the jingling of the bells are an imitation of thunder and whisk of the rain, and that the white beard worn by the boy suggests snow. Girls have a similar game with a toy, like the framework of a kite, the effect of which on the rain is obscure, unless it connects the rise and fall of the kite with that of the clouds and rain.[1]

The frog is said to influence rain because it is a water animal, and [illegible] believed that it stores up water in its body against seasons of drought. The Newārs of Nepāl worship frogs in a pool frequented by him. The priest washes his face and hands, takes in his hand five brazen bowls containing rice, flowers, milk, vermilion, butter, and incense, and says, 'Lord of the Soil, Paramesvara Bhūminātha! I pray you to receive these offerings, send us timely rain, and bless our crops!'[2] Korkus in the Central Provinces when rain is wanted catch a frog and sling it on a stick which boys and girls carry from house to house and the goodman flings water over it.[3] In the Muzaffarpur District, Bengal, low-caste women put a frog in an earthen pot filled with water from five houses. The pot containing the frog is placed in the hollow wooden cup into which the head of the lever used for pounding rice falls, and it is crushed to death, while the women sing songs complaining of the lack of rain.[4] In Kumaun when rain fails a frog is hung with its mouth upwards to a bamboo or tree for a day or two, in the hope that the rain god will take pity on his animal and send rain.[5]

Magical methods are also used to stop excessive rain. In parts of the United Provinces the Rishi Agastya, apparently because he once drank up the ocean, is supposed to have power to stop rain. When rain is excessive they paint his name on a loin-cloth and put it out in the rain, or it is painted on the house-wall, and as it becomes obliterated the rain is checked. Another device is to light a lamp with butter and lay it outside when heavy clouds collect, and the rain god, fearing to put out

[1] Bray, *C. R.* 65 f.
[2] *Indian Antiquary*, xxii. 292 ff.; Waddell, *Himalayas*, 315.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 562.
[4] *J. A. S. B.* lxxi, part iii, p. 39.
[5] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 134.

the sacred light, disperses them. In the Panjab they give an unmarried girl oil and make her pour it on the ground, saying, 'If I pour not out the oil mine be the sin! If thou wilt not disperse the clouds thine be the sin!' In Mirzapur they name twenty-one men who are blind of an eye, tie twenty-one knots in a cord, and fix it under the eaves of the house in order to bind the rain. Pathāns in Baluchistan throw a handful of salt on the fire, nail a horseshoe on the wall well out of reach of the rain, plaster a wheaten unleavened cake on a rubbish-heap, put a Korān into an oven when the fire is out, then bring it back and distribute alms.[1] In the Central Provinces K[illegible] stop rain by getting a naked boy to catch a frog and bury it alive, and Gāros to procure sunshine light fires round a rock to produce warmth.[2] In Kumaun rain is stopped by pouring hot oil into the left ear of a dog, and when the pain makes him howl it is believed that Indra takes pity on him by causing the rain to cease; or the rite of 'binding the blind men' is done by tying up with a triple cord in a piece of cloth five, seven, or eleven grains of Urad pulse, each grain bearing the name of a blind man known to the performer, who buries the packet under the eaves of his house or hangs it on a tree, thus exciting the pity of Indra. Others take seven pieces of granite, seven grains of mustard, and seven pellets of goats' dung, parch them in an oven and then laying them under the drip of the eaves, the packets representing the demon foes of Indra, who is so pleased that he stops the rain. Others reverse the usual order of things and fix a harrow, always used in a horizontal position, at a place where four roads meet. Others invoke Agastya, and at his dread name as drinker of the ocean the clouds disperse, or they fee a Brahman to make sixty holes in a piece of wood and run a string through all of them, thus with appropriate spells binding up the rain: or they lay a piece of unleavened bread in the fields, or take to the meeting of four roads an offering which they defile in a disgusting way, at which Indra is ashamed to let his rain fall.[3] In Bombay a leaf-plate full of boiled rice and curds is put out in an open place and the rain is warned to be off, and if this fail a live coal is laid on a tile in the open and it

[1] Bray, *C. R.* 67.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 562; Playfair, 89.
[3] *P. N. Q.* i. 75, 109; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 133.

is asked to swallow the hateful rain.[1] Stopping the rain is advantageous to certain people like corn-chandlers who are holding back their stocks in the hope of famine, and potters who cannot dry their pots in wet weather. Such castes are often accused of 'burying the rain' by filling a pot with salt and plastering the mouth, when it is believed that rain will not fall until the pot is opened. Cases have occurred when this suspicion has caused attacks on grain merchants and potters.[2] Korkus bring about the same result by making an unmarried boy collect ... pot water under the house eaves and bury it under the hearth, ... the rain ceases as the contents of the pot evaporate.[3]

Hail-storms are naturally attributed to demons fighting in the sky. Lhota Nāgas say that one set of gods in the higher sky are throwing ice at each other, while those in the lower region protect themselves by holding their doors over their heads, and the fragments of the broken ice fall in the form of hail.[4] Nudity appears also in rites intended to disperse hail-storms. In Bengal the Silāra or 'hailborn man', when he sees a storm approaching, runs out of his house almost naked and disperses the storm-cloud by waving his wand.[5] His colleague the Gārpagāri, or 'white hail scarer', in the Central Provinces, when a storm is threatened implores Mahābīr-Hanumān, the ape godling, to disperse the clouds. If this appeal fails, he proceeds to threats, declaring that he will kill himself, and throws off his clothes. If her husband happens to be absent at this critical time, his wife goes to the shrine of Hanumān and stands naked before his image, Hanumān being one of the chief village guardians and the giver of fertility. In former times the Gārpagāri used to slash and cut himself before the shrine,[6] but now the utmost he does is to draw blood from his finger. He would also threaten to sacrifice his son, and instances are known of his actually having done so. Mr. Russell,[7] discussing the question, writes:

'Two ideas appear in these sacrifices of the Gārpagāri. One is the familiar principle of atonement, the blood being offered to appease the god as a substitute for the crops which he seems

[1] *P. N. Q.* i. 126. [2] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 8. [3] *Ibid.* iii. 563.
[4] Mills, 173. [5] Wise, 369. [6] Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 28.
[7] *T. C.* iii. 21 f.

about to destroy. But when the Gārpagāri threatened to kill himself, and actually killed his son, it was not merely as an atonement, because in that case the threats would have had no meaning. His intention seems rather to have been to lay the guilt of homicide upon the god by slaying somebody in front of the shrine, in case nothing else would move him from his purpose of destroying the crops. The idea is the same as that with which people committed suicide in order that their ghosts might haunt those who had driven them to the act. . . . The Gārpagāri directs the hail by throwing a handful of grain in the direction in which he wishes it to go. When the storm begins he will pick up some hailstones, smear them with his blood and throw them away, telling them to rain over rivers, hills, forests and barren ground.'

In the Panjab a class of Rāwals, beggars, quack doctors or astrologers, are also known as Rathbahna, 'checkers of hail' which they effect either by dispersing the clouds or by diverting the hail into a pond or over waste land by the use of their incantations.[1] In Kumaun this duty is undertaken by charmers known as Oli or Oliya, 'hail-men', who get a hollow gourd filled with pebbles, grains of Urad pulse (*Phaseolus mungo*), mustard seed, goats' dung, and cotton seeds. This is tied by a triple cord to the highest tree on a mountain overhanging the village, and the hail-man goes there every day until the crops are cut and mutters incantations. If the crops are reaped without loss he is liberally rewarded.[2]

Another form of rain magic belongs to the imitative or sympathetical variety, when some person or thing, particularly regarded as sacred or uncanny, is doused with water in the hope that rain will follow. In time of drought all the male members of a Gāro village 'repair to a big rock in the neighbourhood, each person holding a gourd of water in his hand. The priest recites a prayer to implore the god to have mercy on them, sacrifices a goat, and smears its blood on the rock. The assembled persons then pour the contents of their gourds over the unfortunate priest to the accompaniment of beating of drums and blowing of wind instruments'.[3] On a hill near Imphāl 'there is a stone which bears a fanciful resemblance to an umbrella, and the Raja used to climb thither in state to

[1] *Folk-lore*, xxi. 331 f. [2] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 106. [3] Playfair, 88 f.

take water from a deep spring below and pour it over this stone, obviously a case of imitative magic. It was said that to erect an iron umbrella on the hill was an almost sure method of getting rain when occasion needed '.[1] With these rain-producing rocks may be compared the Jadah stone often mentioned by Bābar, which after certain rites produced rain or snow.[2] In Bihar, in seasons of drought, a holy stone called Nārāyan-chakra, 'Vishnu's discus', is kept in a vessel of water to bring rain. Sometimes a plantain leaf on which are inscribed the names of 108 villages beginning with the letter K and not ending in the syllable *pur*, 'town', is thrown into water, and low-caste women sing songs praying Barun or Varuna to give rain.[3] In the plains it is a good plan to keep the lingam of Siva-Mahadeva continually soaked with water, and some years ago the people of Mirzapur, when rain failed, employed a gang of labourers who poured water on a famous lingam in the city. At the Saiva shrine of Ambarnāth in the Mana District there is a special trough which can be filled with water to drown 'water-loving' Mahadeva in seasons of scanty rainfall.[4] Reference has already been made to the sculptures representing the dousing of Lakshmi by elephants, the motive of which is probably to cause rain.[5] For the same reason the Pāhān or Orāon priest is doused by the women at the Sārhūl festival, when the marriage of Dharti, the Earth Mother, is celebrated, and the Sāl (*Shorea robusta*) trees are in bloom.[6] In Kumaun when rain fails they sink a Brahman up to his lips in a tank, and there he goes on repeating the name of Raja Indra for a day or two, when rain is sure to fall; or they dig a water trench five or six feet deep and make a Brahman or a Jogi ascetic sit in it, in the hope that the god in pity for the sufferings of the holy man will relent and give rain.[7] In the Panjab the village girls as an old woman, the crankier the better, passes, douse her with cow-dung dissolved in water, or she is made to sit under the spout of the house-roof and get a drenching when rain falls. The language she uses

[1] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 107.

[2] Elias–Ross, 32 f.; Yule, *Cathay*, i, Introd. clxxxvii; *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 70, 198.

[3] *P. N. Q.* iv. 218.

[4] *B. G.* xiv. 5; cf. *Ibid.* xviii, part iii, 339, xx. 448; Forbes, *Rās Mala*, 605; *Folk-lore*, ix. 277 ff.

[5] p. 54, above.

[6] Dalton, 261.

[7] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 134.

under these afflictions is believed to strengthen the charm. It may be added that Pathāns tell their girls that if they lick up the last morsels from a dish of food there will be rain on their wedding day.[1]

In Gujarāt in time of drought it is believed that Indra wishes to lay waste the towns and villages, and the people desert the inhabited sites and cook their food outside. In the Native States this used to be done in obedience to the Raja's proclamation, and a fine was imposed on any one who dared to light a fire in the town. Or a Bhuva sorcerer was called in who directed that offerings should be made to Mātaji, the Mother goddess, in potsherds representing the human skulls out of which the Yoginis demons, her attendants, delight to eat. These offerings must be carried outside the eastern gate of the city, and set down in a circle which has been previously sprinkled with water, the food dedicated being given to the Dhed outcasts and to dogs.[2]

The method of dispersing hail by nudity rites has already been described.[3] When Kharwārs in Mirzapur see hail approaching they throw the wooden peg of the corn-mill into the courtyard, the mill being often used in magic, or they invoke two notorious demons, Ismail Jogi or Nona Chamārin, and ring a bell in a Saiva temple to scare the hail devil. In the Central Provinces a pickaxe is thrown outside the house to disperse by the power of iron a thunderstorm accompanied by hail, and it is believed that all children born by the foot presentation are liable to be struck by lightning.[4] Another device is to put pressure on the hail demon by inflicting physical pain. In Multān it is believed that if you can catch a hailstone in the air and cut it in two before it reaches the ground the hail will disappear, and some years ago a lady at Naini Tal saw her gardener during a hail-storm rush into the kitchen, seize the cook's chopper, and make strokes with it on the ground where the hail was falling.[5] On the same principle when a Gāro fears that his house will be blown down in a storm, he takes his sword or das knife in his hand, goes through the action of chopping the air, and says,

[1] Bray, *C. R.* i. 67.
[2] Forbes, *Rasmala*, 605.
[3] p. 75, above.
[4] Russell, *Nimar Gaz.* i. 61.
[5] *A. S. R.* v. 136; *N. I. N. Q.* i. 13.

'Go! Go! to the mountain pass and to the deep ravine!'[1] During a hailstorm in Kumaun people put into the open air an axe with its edge turned upwards, so that the hailstones may be cut in pieces; they spit on the hailstones or drop on them a few drops of blood taken from the body of some noted sorcerer; they blow a conch-shell in the direction whence the storm is coming; they put a churn in the open air in the hope that when they touch it the stones may become as soft as butter; they send out some one believed to be possessed by a godling or spirit, and make him beat the hail with a shoe, a most contemptuous form of punishment.[2]

The 'wild wind made work In which the gloomy brewer's soul Went by me like a stork'.[3] Storms rage when some great man dies. 'At the time the King, Aurangzeb, died a whirlwind arose, so fierce that it blew down all the tents standing in the encampment; many persons were killed, being choked by the dust, and also animals'.[4] Or the undefined demon receives a special name, as in the Panjab, when Pheru, 'the twister', raises the little whirlwinds and dust-clouds in the hottest weather. He was a Brahman devotee of the Saint Sakhi Sarwar, and Akbar entrusted a District to him, but he gave up his devotion to the saint and as a punishment became a leper. He was cured by eating some charmed earth and till he died believed in the saint. He has a shrine at Miyānkī, in the Lahore District, and when a Panjabi sees a whirlwind approaching he calls out, 'Bhāi Pheru teri kār', 'O Brother Pheru! protect us by thy charmed circle!'[5] Another personage invoked is Hanumān, the ape: 'Hanumān Jodha, teri kār!' 'Valiant Hanumān! save us by thy charmed circle!' In the Shahpur District is a shrine of Saint Rahma, 'the Merciful One', whom the people once neglected to propitiate during wheat harvest. So he cursed them with whirlwinds which blew for nine days in succession, and now they are careful to pay due respect to him.[6] In Kala Dāno Bhūt, the old Dānava Giant who warred against the gods, now turned into a Bhūt or malevolent ghost, signifies his wrath by sending a storm, and when in Seoni Matia threatens

[1] Playfair, 88.
[2] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 135.
[3] Tennyson, *The Talking Oak*, 53–5.
[4] Manucci, iv. 398.
[5] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 129, 568; but the tales underrate a conflation of legends, Temple, *Legends*, ii. 104 ff., iii. 301.
[6] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 39.

to cause a dust-storm a cake containing a number of hairs is offered to him, and he is kept so busy picking them out that he has no time to send his wind.[1]

From the time when the Indo-Aryans entered the Panjab the great snow-clad peaks of the Himalaya, 'abode of snow', have deeply impressed the imagination of the peasantry of Northern India. 'He who thinks of Himāchal, though he should not behold him, is greater than he who performs all worship at Kāsi [Benares]; As the dew is dried up by the morning sun, so are the sins of mankind by the sight of Himāchal.'[2] But mountain worship is not prominent in the Vedas, except in connexion with other inanimate objects or with gods.[3] Meru-Sumeru, the fabulous mountain, the navel of the earth, on which stands Swarga, Indra's paradise, with cities of the gods and habitations of celestial spirits, is a later conception.[4] Still later, when the departmental gods arose, they were provided with special abodes in the range: Siva on Kailās, possibly because the peak bears some resemblance to a lingam; Vishnu's Vaikuntha, with Indra's paradise, on Mount Meru; while Devi, especially in her manifestation as Pārvati, 'the mountaineer', is closely connected with the range as a whole. The great peak, known to the Tibetans as Kinchinjunga, 'the five repositories of the great glaciers', is an object of awe and worship; a Lama is described offering prayers to it to cure a lad suffering from apoplexy, by perching a saddle on a stone, burning incense, scattering rice to the winds, and invoking the neighbouring mountains.[5] Mount Everest, the abode of five celestial nymphs who confer longevity, was usually identified with Gaurisankar, called after Siva and his consort, but it is known that there are two distinct peaks, the main one that which the recent expedition failed to climb.[6]

From early times the Himalayan valleys were the resort of sages and ascetics, and many places possess legends of the Rishis or Siddhas, the deified saints. The Pāndavas after the Great War retired in sorrow and remorse to the northern

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* iii. 267; Russell, *Seoni Gaz.* i. 47.
[2] *Mānasa Khanda*, Atkinson, ii. 271.
[3] Macdonell, *V. M.* 154.
[4] *E. R. E.* ii. 698 ff.; Waddell, *T. B.* 78 ff.
[5] Waddell, *T. B.* 370; Hooker, 416; Risley, *T. C.* ii. 10.
[6] Waddell, *Himalayas*, 351 f.; *I. G. I.* xii. 49.

mountains, on their way to Indra's paradise on Mount Meru, and Yudhisthira refused to enter paradise unless he was allowed to bring with him his favourite dog. Brahmans have taken care to associate many a rock and stream with the wanderings of the heroes, while pilgrimages to Gangotri and Jamnotri, the sources of the Ganges and Jumna, to the shrine of Siva at Kedārnāth, that of Vishnu at Badarīnāth, the Manasarowar lake, have caused suffering or death to many and have greatly stimulated veneration for the Holy Land.[1]

Mountain passes, where pilgrims suffer from the mysterious effects of the rarefied air, are supposed to be the resort of demons.[2] Tibetans worship Chan to cure mountain sickness, the offering being made by smearing red earth on a goat, and either sacrificing it or letting it loose to wander at will in the mountains.[3] 'When the path crossed the crest of the spurs there was usually a cairn of stones, or a rude stone altar, sacred to the spirit of the mountains. At these spots our men laid down their loads, and tearing a few strips of rag from their dress, tied them to a twig or a stone, which they planted on the cairn, as an offering to the mountain spirit, and called with a loud voice, "Pray accept our offering! The spirits are victorious! The devils are defeated!"'[4]

Mount Mandara, resting on the tortoise incarnation of Vishnu, revolved by the gods and demons when they determined by churning the ocean to recover the valuables lost in the deluge, is now identified with Mandargiri Hill in the Bhagalpur District, Province of Bihar and Orissa.[5]

Mountain worship also prevails among the non-Aryan tribes. When the Ojha or sorcerer of the Kharwārs ascends certain peaks in the Vindhyan range the Baiga who has charge of particular hills offers goats, black or red and white, and chickens, and the spirits are propitiated when drought or a hailstorm is threatened by scattering rice on the ground.[6] In one of these hills the spirit is embodied in the locusts usually found there, and in another Bansapti Mā, half hill and half jungle godling, abides, is periodically married to the phallic godling Gansām, and if

[1] Atkinson, ii. 699 ff.; Lacey, *passim*.
[2] Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*.
[3] C. Sherring, *Mem. J. A. S. B.* i. 117.
[4] Waddell, *Himalayas*, 115.
[5] Dowson, 36; Buchanan, ii. 60 ff.; *I. G. I.* xvii. 149.
[6] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 41, 46, 58.

any one dares to sing in her domains he becomes sick or mad.[1] In another hill dwell the evil spirits of those who have suffered a violent death; they rule the hail, and at harvest-time the Baiga offers a goat, sprinkles rice on the ground, and prays, 'O Great Lord! May this offering be effectual!'

Both the Vindhyan and Kaimūr ranges have become the abode of the orthodox gods. Asthabhuja, the eight-armed Devi, and Maharāni Vindhyesvari, 'Queen, Goddess of the Vindhyas', have shrines on the slopes falling into the Ganges valley, the latter at Bindhāchal, where the Thugs used to worship her and share their plunder with their guardian goddess. There are traditions of human sacrifices offered to her, now commuted into the slaughter of goats in a brutal fashion. Both ranges are said to be derived from the Himalaya. When Rāma was building the causeway across the strait to Lanka, he sent Hanumān, the ape, and his army to fetch the materials, but before they returned the work had been finished, and they threw down their loads and formed the two ranges of hills. By another account the Vindhya was jealous of the Himalaya, whose peaks were lighted earlier by the first glow of sunrise, and prayed the sun to alter his course. But he refused to do this, on which the Vindhya swelled so high that it obscured sun, moon, and stars. The gods in their alarm invoked the aid of Rishi Agastya who charged the Vindhya to bend down and allow him to reach Southern India. This was done, but he never came back, and the range could never recover its former height. The tale has been interpreted to explain the spread of Aryan culture to the south.

Many other hills have their legends and are venerated. Such is Dharmasila, 'rock of piety', at Gaya, with which Yama, by order of Brahmā, crushed a local demon.[2] At Govardhan, near Mathura, is the hill which Krishna held up with his finger for seven days to protect his people from the tempest which Indra, deprived of his accustomed sacrifice, poured upon them.[3]

[1] Crooke, *T. C.* iv. 34.
[2] *E. R. E.* vi. 182; Buchanan, i. 51 f.
[3] Growse, *Mathura*, 60, 300 ff.

II

THE VILLAGE GODLINGS

THE North Indian village is a definite area of land held by one or by several joint proprietors, and it, or certain divisions of it, forms the unit on which the land revenue is assessed. In Bombay we find the Raiyatwāri village, held by individual tenants who pay their assessment through a headman. The village in its primitive form is self-contained, inhabited not only by the landlord or landlords and their tenants, but by a body of menial labourers who perform various duties on behalf of the community.[1]

As the village assumes many varied forms according to the tribe or caste of the proprietor, tenants, and village servants, so the local gods which protect it and supply the spiritual wants of the community are infinitely varied, but they possess certain individual characters which distinguish them from the higher gods of the official Brahman pantheon.[2] They have no widely extended power like the greater gods, but are distinctly local in character; that is to say, their jurisdiction is confined to the village to which they are attached. And so in certain cases the village has become the exogamous unit, intermarriages of its inhabitants being unusual or disapproved.[3] We may imagine that the earliest settlers occupying small areas in the primeval jungle, the abode of more dangerous spirits, felt the need of divine protection, and established the rude village shrine dedicated to the local guardians which still survive throughout the land, developing into, or overshadowed by, the newer temple of one of the greater gods.

As the result of this isolation came the necessity for the demarcation and sanctification of the boundary which fixed the limits of settled occupancy. The most primitive method of

[1] See Baden-Powell, 13 ff. [2] Grant Duff, i. 28 ff.

[3] Risley, *T. C.* i. 145 ff.; Gait, *C. R.* Bengal, i. 252; Crooke, *T. C.* i, Introd. ccii, iii. 139, iv. 42, 279; Dalton, 81.

securing this end is that of the Baiga, priest and sorcerer of the jungle tribes, who periodically makes his circuit round the village limits, scattering a line of wine as he marches, but to the disgust and danger of his parishioners he often becomes so drunk before he has finished his rounds that he leaves a gap through which hostile demons find their entrance. Sometimes the demarcation is magical, as when a goat whose uncanny habit of shivering denotes that it is possessed by some spirit or godling, is driven along the border-line, and where he shivers the boundary mark is set up.[1] Even the drunken Baiga is supposed to acquire from the liquor he drinks or sprinkles a quasi-divine afflatus, and hence tribes like the Gonds worship the Mahua tree (*Bassia latifolia*) from the corolla tubes of which it is distilled, and it is used in various religious and domestic rites.[2] Or the care and demarcation of the boundary is left in the hands of the autochthonous tribes, who as ancient owners of the soil are supposed to understand more clearly than their betters the methods of conciliating or repressing the local spirits. The Holaya outcasts of Bombay settle boundary disputes and receive a burial fee because they once possessed the land and must be paid for allowing burial to the alien dead, while they can pacify the earth spirits who are disturbed and may resent the digging of the grave.[3] In the United Provinces in the case of a disputed boundary a Chamār or currier, one of the menial castes, is sent along the line with a cowhide over his head, by which he is supposed to gain inspiration in selecting the proper boundary wherever he chances to walk.[4] A custom of this kind was probably the origin of the common story of somebody, like Dido, asking for as much ground as a hide would cover and then cutting it into strips. The boundary is in some places put in charge of the ancestors or sainted dead. In Jhansi the villages are haunted by the spirits of ancient proprietors, whom it is necessary to propitiate, but, as a Pandit remarked to Sleeman, 'It is wrong to suppose that the ghost of an old proprietor must always be doing mischief—he is often the best friend of the cultivators, and of the present proprietors

[1] Lyall, *A. S.* i. 19.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 314 ff.
[3] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 75: cf. *J. R. A. S.* 1897, p. 258.
[4] Elliot, *Gloss.* 239, 257: cf. Thurston, *T. C.* ii. 334 f.

too, if they treat him with proper respect; for he will not allow the people of any other village to encroach upon their boundaries, and they will be saved all the expense and annoyance of a reference to the Adālat (judicial tribunal) for the settlement of boundary disputes.[1] Sometimes the true boundary is selected by a sort of ordeal, as among the Orāons, who dig a hole at each of the lines alleged to be correct and bury a man in each, he who can stand the test longest being held to be successful.[2]

Boundaries must be maintained because irrespective of personal danger the stranger is always hostile and may bring evil, that is to say, outer spirits with him.[3] If it is necessary to admit them, it is advisable to disinfect them in some way. When the Kunbi bridegroom in the Deccan reaches the boundary of his bride's village as he comes to fetch her, a lemon, potent for the dispersal of evil spirits, is waved over his head and then thrown away, and his eyes are touched with cold water; when an Uchhla comes to bring his bride home, as the procession reaches the boundary a coco-nut is broken and rice and curds are scattered to appease evil spirits; a Gabit widow, haunted by the spirit of her first husband, is remarried in an uninhabited house on the village boundary, or at the temple of Vetāla or Bhūtnath, 'Lord of evil spirits'.[4] In Gujarāt, when a young couple quarrel, it is supposed that Kshetrapāla, the field spirit, has not given up his rights over the girl, so the pair go to the village boundary, enclose a square with four heaps of earth, lay a reddened stone in the centre, walk round it four times, and when they have thus conciliated the spirit they start married life again.[5] In these cases of taboo of the bridegroom it may be assumed that he also for his own protection must be disinfected; he, too, enters a strange village, and may be liable to the attack of the strange local spirits. Eating the food of strangers is also dangerous for the same reason. Hence comes the danger of eating the food of fairy-land. In one of the folk-tales a man who eats the fruit of the Jamba tree (*Eugenia Jambolana*), which is taboo, becomes rigid and motionless.[6]

[1] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 221 f.
[2] Dehon, 158.
[3] Cf. *E. R. E.* xi. 883 ff.; Frazer, *G. B.*, 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 101 ff.
[4] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 304, 473; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 349.
[5] Stevenson, 88.
[6] Somadeva, ii. 198; cf. Hartland, *S. F. T.* 42; *E. R. E.* v. 706 f.

These boundary rites naturally develop into the cult of a special boundary spirit. The Kandhs used to sacrifice a foal or goat at the boundary and pray to Sundi Pennu, the boundary godling, and they sacrificed at special places an unsuspecting traveller or a victim procured by purchase, doubtless in the hope that his spirit would guard it, with the prayer, 'Keep disease from our boundary: let no hostile gods of other countries cross it, nor allow tigers or snakes to enter our limits!'[1] Kurmis worship Mirohia, god of the field boundary; he has no image, but every farmer when he begins sowing or cutting his crops makes an offer on the field boundary in his name, lest he may flatten the corn by a storm or cause the cart to break on its way to the threshing-floor.[2] The rite often takes the form of raising some kind of protection. Lalungs in the month of Māgh (January–February) plant a tall shaft of bamboo with religious rites on the boundary of the village; the early Munda settlers when occupying new land used to light bonfires at the four corners and draw straight lines from one to the other to mark the boundary; Lushais make a sacrifice at the outskirts of a village to appease the demons inhabiting the woods and streams.[3] Stones represent an embodied curse against those who violate boundaries, the best examples being found in Northern India.[4]

A good example of the localization of the village godlings comes from the Simla Hills. The territory is divided among a number of Deotas, probably deified heroes, who have their temples in the highest hills. Their images of very crude workmanship are made of wood or stone, and each of them has his own jurisdiction irrespective of the minor village gods.[5] This localization acts in two ways: it results in the parochialism and want of organization which is a characteristic of Hinduism and of the political history of India, and secondly these independent village godlings were readily absorbed in the official pantheon because they were too weak to resist Brahmanism which compromised with them by occasionally admitting those found

[1] Macpherson, 366; *N. I. N. Q.* i. 56.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 82.
[3] Gait, *C. R. Assam*, i. 230; Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Mundas*, 116; Shakespear, 73.
[4] Whitehead, *Village Gods*, 107 f.; Westermarck, *M. I.* i. 68; *E. R. E.* xi. 872.
[5] Harikishan Kaul, i. 113.

to be most efficient and influential as incarnations and manifestations of the greater gods. In ordinary cults their position to the Brahman body is not only one of subordination but of contempt. They not only accept blood sacrifice which in Hinduism is practically confined to the cults of the Mother deities, but it often consists of fowls or pigs detested by the orthodox. They are primarily the deities of the menial classes, though people of the higher castes, especially women, worship them in a covert way when they require boons which godlings specially provide, such as that of offspring to the childless, and they are particularly potent in dealing with the diseases of men or animals and control the operations of agriculture. Their priests are usually drawn from the menial classes, though there is no recognized priesthood like that of Brahmans; any man may at times become possessed by them or show in other ways that he is able to propitiate or coerce them. In the cult of Bhūmiya, the consort of the Earth Mother, the officiant is often a sweeper; the Bhopa or village priest in Central India is ordinarily of menial caste; the Māli or gardener sacrifices goats, which many Brahmans object to do, in honour of Devi, and in Bengal he officiates at the worship of Sitala, the small-pox deity; the Baiga among the Kols and allied tribes in the Vindhyan Hills is usually a member of one of the most primitive or degraded forest tribes.[1] In the old Dravidian villages there was a glebe divided into three parts: one a provision for the Bhūts or evil spirits; a second for the village godlings and the Desauli or district godling, whose jurisdiction over them was like that of a chief; and a third for the Earth godlings, male and female. As the people began to adopt Hinduism the Pāhān or local priest disappeared, and the holding became the rent-free glebe of the Brahman who took his place.[2]

Another characteristic of the village deities is that in their most primitive form they are nameless. Some gods receive no names lest the title may be used by some sorcerer who thus gains power over him, but in the present case they are deities of all work whose functions are undefined or only imperfectly discriminated. Besides this, in the case of gods of the nether

[1] Malcolm, *C. I.* ii. 206; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 163; Wise, 343 f.: *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 5.
[2] Baden-Powell, 180.

world it is dangerous to announce their powers as they are associated with death.[1] No Santāl will divulge the name of his Orakbonga or household god, or of his Abgībonga, or secret god, to any one but his eldest son, and men are particularly careful to keep the knowledge from their wives lest they should acquire undue influence with the Bongas, become witches, and eat up their family when the protection of the gods has been withdrawn.[2] In Northern India the village godlings are often collectively called Dīwār, a term probably derived from Sanskrit *deva-āli*, or *āvali*, 'race, family, dynasty of gods', though the association of the Persian *dīh*, used in the Musalmān revenue system to denote the village or taxable unit, may have contributed to its use in the case of the village guardians.[3] It is only when the village godling is invested with some special sphere of activity, such as the control of disease, hunting, the field, the jungle, that he is given a name expressing such functions.

The village shrine in which the collective godlings abide is, in the first place, closely associated with the sacred or guardian tree of the community.[4] Secondly, as the godlings are only imperfectly anthropomorphized, no special images are usually required. All that is needed is something to denote the presence of deity—in the hills piles of rude stones; in the plains, where stones are not procurable, there may be some pottery which serves as an abiding-place for the godlings. Pots are naturally used for this purpose. In Nepāl the Kalas or water-pot used in Gurkha weddings is employed in making or confirm-a priest; it is sacred, no one is allowed to touch it, and worship is done to it.[5] In Bombay a pot is used to represent the deceased ancestors, and in this form offerings are made to him.[6] Part of the marriage ritual for all classes of Hindus is the installation of a pile of pots in which the deities who promote fertility abide.[7] In Kumaun it is the practice to shut up some of the local godlings in a copper pot to prevent them from wandering and doing mischief.[8] Even the greater gods abide in pots, as for instance

[1] For nameless gods see Farnell, *Evolution of Religion*, 184 ff.; *ibid.*, *Hero Cults*, 83; *E. R. E.* ix. 178 ff.
[2] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 232.
[3] Elliot, *Gloss.* 255.
[4] See p. 400 ff., below.
[5] Oldham, i. 410 f.
[6] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 114: on pot-shrines or spirit homes, *B. G.* xv, part i, 248 note.
[7] ? Photo in Thornton.
[8] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 145; *Folk-lore*, viii. 325 ff.

at Durgapūja or Naurātra, the nine days' festival in honour of the Mother goddess; one of the rites is the Ghatasthāpana, when by means of magic the goddess is invited to enter a jar which becomes the central object of worship.[1] Sometimes in the plains, when it happens to be procurable, a piece of carved stone or some image from a ruined Buddhist or Hindu shrine is set up to represent the village godling.

The village shrine in its most primitive type is always hypaethral or open to the sky. Cases are quoted from the Panjab of the shrines of saints being left unroofed, the idea being that the roof prevents the soul of the saint from returning to Heaven after its occasional visits to his tomb.[2] Shrines dedicated to the sun are often open to the sky to allow his rays to penetrate to it. The marriage pavilion is usually roofed, but the Kādars in Bengal perform their marriages in the open air, contrary to the general rule that a virgin should be married in the courtyard, but the less respectable Sāgar marriage, like that of a widow, is relegated to the women's apartments; but this case is exceptional.[3] The object may be to allow the fertilizing rays of the sun to shine on the pair. The village shrine often contains palaeolithic or neolithic stone implements, held to be mysterious by people living in the age of metals, often supposed to be thunderbolts, containing the seed of fire and thus connected with the sky god. The original Gond gods were hunting-weapons, and representations of animals, often pieces of iron, bell-metal, or shaped like cattle-bells, tied up in grass and fixed in the fork of a Sāj tree (*Terminalia tomentosa*), or buried in a recess in the forest.[4]

A further development appears when the shrine becomes a building, generally square, of brick masonry, with a bulbous head and perhaps an iron spike as a finial, the structure generally facing eastward.[5] To mark the sanctity of the place or to disperse evil influences a red flag is sometimes set up on a pole or fixed on an adjoining tree; it also serves as a convenient perch on which the godling may alight and rest whenever he comes, or a few bricks are set up as his seat, for he may not

[1] Pratapachandra Ghosha, 32; Gupte, 184; Balaji Sitaram Kothari, 65 f.
[2] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 534.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* i. 368.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 99.
[5] See photograph in Briggs's frontispiece.

rest on the ground. Sometimes, as among the forest tribes of the Vindhyan Hills, the shrine is a small mud platform roofed with a thatch, in the middle a cone of clay represents the godling, and beside it hangs the Gurda or magic chain with which the Baiga or hedge-priest castigates hysterical women and other patients possessed by evil spirits and thus relieves them. In the south-east Panjab the village often contains a Chamăr's or leather-dresser's shrine, in which a lamp is lighted twice a month, and patients vow that if the godling vouchsafes a cure they will make an offering of bread, a coco-nut, or a flag to the shrine.[1] Little cots are often hung on a tree near the shrine to commemorate recovery from small-pox, or as a charm to relieve barrenness. Gãros have sacrifical stones at the entrances of every village, rough unhewn blocks, set up without any regularity, which are looked upon with reverence and may never be removed. When a village is moved to another site the stones remain and the villagers must return to the old site for the annual rite. Sometimes each stone represents a particular guardian spirit, but others have only a single collective name.[2]

Special care is devoted to the selection of the site of a new village, and some form of magical divination is usually employed. In the plains, as a rule, a village is never built on an old deserted site, because it is thought that the former occupants have exhausted its Barakat or luck and blessing. A common method is to plant a pole on the north side, the direction of the heavens of the gods, and this is done in presence of the neighbouring landowners, who act as witnesses and give their approval, in return for which they receive sweetmeats. Association in this rite is believed to be the strongest evidence in support of a claim to proprietorship. Beneath the pole to propitiate the chthonic spirits disturbed by its erection rice, betel, sugar, and a piece of red cloth are buried. If it should happen that the pole takes root and puts forth branches it is regarded as a most favourable omen. In the Panjab uplands the tree selected is usually the Jand (*Prosopis spicigera*) or the Pilu (*Salvadora persica*); in the lowlands the Ber (*Zizyphus jujuba*). In the Ganges valley the pole is usually cut from one of the varieties

[1] Cf. the prayer-flags at Buddhist shrines: Waddell, *B. T.* 408 ff.; *E. R. E.* x. 205.

[2] Playfair, 96 f.

of the sacred fig.[1] Lhota Nāgas select a head-tree for the village, and the would-be founder cuts a branch from it. If the cut be a clean one and no leaves fall the omen is good, but bad if the branch is not cut through with a single blow or leaves fall from it. When a new village is occupied they take a branch from the head-tree of the parent village and stick it in the ground under the new head-tree.[2] In North Oudh the site is marked off by stakes in the form of a cross driven into the ground and worshipped on the day when the settlement is completed. These are allowed to decay unless some trouble caused by divine displeasure attracts attention and causes them to be renewed. Such stakes are particularly common in villages occupied by the non-Aryan Thārus in the Tarāi or pestilential lowlands, where they may be seen in groups of ten or more on the edge of the cultivated area. They protect the resident from the uncanny dangers of the jungle which lies beyond him. Birhors represent their godling Darha by a split bamboo fixed in the ground in an inclined position, and known as Sipāhi, 'sepoy, sentinel', the guardian of the site; this is also a Munda and Orāon custom, and among the Gonds two carved posts, one much shorter than the other, represent the tutelary godlings, male and female.[3] An iron spike is often driven into the ground at the site of a new village to give magical permanence to the settlement.

In the Gorakhpur District, United Provinces, a more elaborate ritual is performed to identify and control the deities of a newly founded village. When the site is selected an Ojha or sorcerer is called in, and he begins by beating his drum to warn all vagrant, foreign spirits to depart and to summon those who abide in the place. The people assemble and two men, known respectively as the Mattiwā, 'earth-man', and the Pattiwā, 'leaf-man', become possessed by the local spirits, dance and shout, their incoherent ejaculations being interpreted by the Ojha, who suddenly rushes upon them and grasps with his hands at the spirits supposed to be circling in the air round them. He then sprinkles some grains of sesamum round them and receives the grains in a perforated piece of wood cut from the sacred Gular fig-tree (*Ficus glomerata*). The hole is immediately plastered over with clay and cow-dung, and the wood which

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 35. [2] Mills, 5 f., 28 f. [3] Dalton, 220, 281.

thus safely holds the spirits is promptly buried at the place selected for the Deohār or shrine of the village godlings.

In the Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces, the Dungar-deo or hill god and the Māta or Mother goddess exist everywhere already; you need only look and find them in their hill or under their tree. But the Mutuadeo has usually to be created by taking a heap of stones from a neighbouring stream and sacrificing a pig and seven chickens in his honour. Korkus perform a magical rite to secure the prosperity of a new village. A wooden cup is filled with millet to a level with its brim, but no 'head' is poured on, and it is placed before Mutuadeo. They watch it at night and next morning pour out the grain and measure it again. If the grain fills the cup, and there is a 'head', still more if it brims and runs over, this is a sign that the village will prosper, and that every farmer's grain will run over in the same way. But it is an evil omen if the grain does not rise to the level of the brim of the cup.[1]

This vaguely constituted group of village godlings or spirits becomes in process of time departmentalized, and special duties are assigned to each of them.

One of the leading village godlings is Khetrpāl, the field guardian. In his more primitive form he sometimes abides in an earthern jar, marked with white and black stripes, which the farmer fixes on a pole in his field to protect his crops, or in a stone set up with the same purpose. In Gujarāt this stone is painted with veneration, and is supposed to embody a much dreaded spirit known euphemistically as Māma, or maternal uncle.[2] In like manner the Mundas on the day after the Soso-Bonga festival set up branches of sacred trees in the middle of each of their rice fields.[3] But this primitive guardian of the scarecrow type has been taken over by the Brahmans in the Panjab, where his function is to guard the world. They have made out of him two groups, one of eleven personages with the Mother goddess in the centre, and a second of seventeen who guard the quarters of the heavens, like the official Digpāl or Dikpāl, 'quarters-guardian', who are sometimes in the form of elephants like the more respectable Diggaja.[4]

[1] Elliott, 257. [2] *B. G.* ix, part i, 284 f.; Mead–Macgregor, *C. R.* i. 67.
[3] Sarat Chandra Roy, 482. [4] Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 112 note.

Closely allied, if not identical, with him is the special godling of the soil, Bhūmiya, 'he of land or soil', who is also known as Kshetrapāl or Khetpāl, Khera, guardian of the mound on which the village stands, Zamīndār, 'the land-holder', or in the hills Sāim, Sayām, Syāma, 'the black one'. In the western plains Bhūmiya is a male, but in Oudh we find Bhūmiya Rāni, 'the soil queen'. Either as male or female Bhūmiya brings fertility, and among the Sāgars of Bombay the binding pact of the marriage rite is walking round the altar dedicated to the field god.[1] In Oudh the worship of the goddess consists in spreading flat cakes and sweetmeats on the ground, and when they have laid some time in the sunshine, probably to attract its fertilizing power to the soil, they are eaten by the farmer and his family. In the Panjab

'the first act by which the proposed site of a village is consecrated is the setting up of a shrine to Bhūmiya, and when two villages have combined their homesteads for greater security against the marauders of former days, the people in the one which moved still worship the Bhūmiya of the deserted site. Bhūmiya is worshipped after the harvest, at marriage, and on the birth of a male child; and Brahmans are commonly fed in her name. Women often take their children to the shrine on Sundays, and the first milk of a cow or buffalo is always offered there.'[2]

His holy day is the Chaudar or fourteenth day of each lunar fortnight. Thus in his most primitive form Bhūmiya is one of the many consorts of the Mother Earth, but his progress towards adoption into Brahmanism is shown in the Panjab legend from the Gurgaon District that he is a deified Brahman who once served the original settlers. Some Bhūmiyas are testy in character. People who by accident sleep near their shrines feel a heavy weight on the chest, and they visit with illness any one who dares to brush his teeth near the holy place. These ill-tempered Bhūmiyas are respected and worshipped, while those who are kindly are neglected.[3] In part, again, of the eastern Panjab the Bhaiyyon or 'brethren', the concrete representation of the kin, take the place of Bhūmiya, and when a new hamlet is formed a couple of bricks are taken from the Bhaiyyon shrine

[1] Enthoven, *T. C.* iii. 313.
[2] Ibbetson, 114.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 107.

in the parent village to secure the continuance of the godling's favours.[1]

As a fertility godling the name Bhūmiya is naturally applied to the bull released after a death. The popular belief is that this is done in order that the animal may carry away with him the sins of the dead man or the contagion of death, like the cow in Vedic ritual which was intended for sacrifice and was released.[2] In the modern ritual before the bull is let loose the mark of the Trisūla or trident of Siva is branded on its right thigh and on its left the Chakra or wheel of Vishnu, and Brahmans say that 'the ancestors who have been so troublesome will remain quiet and good in the heavens for as many years as there are particles of dust adhering to the bull's horn whenever it digs in the earth'.[3] But there is another form of the rite. Among Brahmans in the Central Provinces the bull is branded with the mark of Siva and released after being brought to stand over a dying man, and water was poured into his mouth down the tail of the beast. But it is sometimes formally wedded to three or four female calves, and this is supposed to propitiate the childless and unmarried dead who are provided with offspring in the form of his calves.[4] With this rite we may compare the Vedic custom of giving a cow to the Brahmans to keep his soul in crossing the river of death, while a second cow was led with the funeral, killed, and its members laid on those of the dead, and its kidneys put in the hands of the corpse as tit-bits for the dogs of Yama.[5] Such a sacred bull wanders in the village fields, acts as a parish bull, eats the crops as it pleases, and no one dares to interfere with it; in sacred cities like Benares such bulls claim the right of eating grain at the corn-chandlers' shops. These beasts cause so much damage to the fields that the orthodox rite of Vrishotsarga, 'bull releasing', is gradually falling into disuse, in which 'the chief mourner implores Siva to consent to the deliverance of the bull, so that as a reward for the good deed the deceased may find a place in the Abode of Bliss'.[6]

In the northern hills Bhūmiya is a benevolent godling, who

[1] Rose, *Gloss*. i. 194 f.
[2] *Folk-lore*, iv. 398 f.; *E. R. E.* iv. 477.
[3] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 125.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 374 f., iii. 235; Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 199; Rose, *Gloss* i. 855.
[5] *E. R. E.* iv. 475.
[6] Dubois, 493 f.; Atkinson, ii. 927; Monier-Williams, 319.

does not, as a rule, force his worship on any one by injuring him or his crops. Every village has a small temple, often no more than a few feet square, dedicated to him. When the crop is sown a handful of corn is sprinkled over a stone in the corner of the field nearest his shrine, in the hope that he will protect the fields from hail, blight, and wild animals, and at harvest-time he receives the first-fruits that he may save the corn from rats and insects. As lord of the village he punishes the wicked and rewards the virtuous, for he is always interested in the general prosperity, receiving his dues at marriage, child-birth, and other occurrence of good fortune, but he seldom claims annual sacrifice, being satisfied with the humblest offering of the fruits of the earth.[1]

In the Panjab, again, Khera Deota, the impersonation of the village mound, and his colleague Chanwand are often confounded with Bhūmiya, and their cult is closely connected with that of the Jathera, 'place of the elder', which represent the common ancestor of the clan or village, the Kāla Mahar of the Jāts, who has special influence over cows, and to whom the first milk of every cow is offered. Or, again, there is identified with the Theh or Thiya, the mound which marks the site of the parent village of the tribe.[2] In the Central Panjab the Jathera may be dedicated to a progenitor of the clan, the founder of the village, any prominent member of it, or to a Sati who died with her husband. Elsewhere the Bhūmiya differs from the Jathera. When a village is founded a mound is raised and near it a Jand tree (*Prosopis spicigera*) is planted; the first man who dies, whatever his caste may be, is buried or burnt on this mound, and a shrine is dedicated to him as the village guardian.[3] In short, the cult of Bhūmiya, in which are combined an earth god, a sacred bull, and a deceased ancestor, forms an excellent example of the fluidity of peasant beliefs, particularly when we find the rustic Bhūmiya elevated into the orthodox pantheon as Bhūmīsvara Siva-Mahādeva and his consort Bhūmīsvari Devi.[4]

A more popular and more interesting member of this group of godlings, guardians of the earth, is Bhairon, who has now been adopted into the Brahmans' pantheon as Bhairava, the

[1] Atkinson, ii. 825.
[2] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 374 f.
[3] Maclagan, *C. R.* i. 103 f.
[4] Führer, 146.

title of the eight inferior forms or manifestations of Siva and his consort Bhairavi, 'the terrible', Devi. He is always represented in his shrines accompanied by his dog, which also has received promotion under the name of Ruru. The dog was one of the animals first domesticated by man, and Bhairon probably started his divine career as the deified dog of cowherds or shepherds in the nomadic stage, like Khandoba, the Marātha village guardian who also is attended by his dog.[1] He thus became associated with the soil as a giver of fertility and became one of the many consorts of Mother Earth. Siva as Bhairava gives his name to the Rājput god of war and to the Bhairava Jhamp, or 'leap', the precipice over which fanatics used to seek death in the hope that they would be reincarnated as Rajas.[2] In the Nepāl Tarāi the dreaded season of jungle fever begins in April at the end of the cold weather, and then the Devi, the Mother goddess, lets out Bhairava, the Destroyer, in the form of a tiger, who after his festival devours any one trespassing in the jungles, his domains.[3] Bhairava is here represented by a copper-gilt head, with open mouth, prominent fang-like teeth, dishevelled hair, and a third eye fixed vertically in the middle of the forehead, just as Siva Trayambaka, 'the three-eyed', has a third eye contained in, or surmounted by, the moon's crescent.[4] Besides the title of Ruru, the connexion of Siva with the dog is marked by that of Svāsva, 'he whom the dog serves as a horse'. In one of the Rājput temples Bhairava appears holding a freshly severed human head in his hand, his dog waiting to catch the falling drops of blood,[5] and in Northern India a common way of conciliating Bhairon is to feed a black dog in his honour.

Bhairon also appears as Kāl Bhairon or Bhairava, 'the black one', a sort of warden or doorkeeper at Saiva temples, indicating that he is on the way to promotion, depicted with eighteen arms, decorated with garlands of skulls, snake ear-rings and armlets, and a snake twisted round his head, the chthonic, malevolent reptile finding his natural home in the cult of one who was originally an earth godling. In the Deccan he manifests

[1] Grant Duff, i, Introd. li ff.
[2] Tod, i. 412, ii. 843, iii. 1663.
[3] Oldham, i. 150 f., ii. 298.
[4] *Ibid.* ii. 196 f.
[5] K. D. Erskine, iii A. 292.

himself as Bāl or 'child' Bhairon, in the form of an unhewn stone smeared with oil and vermilion. He is propitiated with offerings of ghi or butter, and he cures snake-bite, and gives oracles by means of two small holes in his stone. The inquirer explains his case to the godling, puts a betel-nut into each hole, and tells him that if the nut on his right side falls first it means that his business will prosper; if the left nut falls first, that it will fail, and so it turns out. Twice a year, before sowing and reaping, he is worshipped as giver of fertility.[1]

In the Panjab Bhairon has risen in the world as one of the attendants of the dreaded Kāli, worshipped by Sikh watermen, but his original rustic character comes out in his representation, a stout black figure with a bottle of wine in his hands. Every important town has one of his shrines, where he is propitiated as an evil spirit and his followers drink wine and eat meat. One sect of ascetics, allied to the Jogis, who are specially addicted to his worship, besmear themselves with vermilion and oil, go about the bazars begging and singing his praises, striking themselves with whips, and as he represents fertility young girls used to be married to him at one of his temples.[2] In Northern India he is known as Lāth Bhairon, 'Bhairon with his club', Bāl, or 'child', Nand, 'happiness', also the name of Krishna's foster-father, the two last titles being possibly euphemistic. In Benares he is known as Bhaironnāth, 'Lord Bhairon', the deified Kotwāl or police magistrate of the sacred city who guards all Siva's temples. He marches about with his club, like Bhimsen who also has his home at Benares, and his image is of dark-blue colour, approaching black. Images of his dog in sugar are presented to him, and his temple swarms with savage dogs.[3] He is also known as Bhūt Bhairon, 'Lord of vicious ghosts', like Bhūtīsvara, a title of his master Siva.[4] A legend tells that at Māndhāta, the sacred island in the Narbada river, pilgrims were prevented from visiting the famous shrine of Omkār Mahādeva through fear of Kāla Bhairava and his consort Kāli, who fed on human flesh; but Daryāonāth, an ascetic, shut up Kāli in an underground chamber, and appeased

[1] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 289.
[2] Maclagan, *C. R.* i. 107 f.; for self-torture cf. Ja'far Sharīf, 171 ff.
[3] M. Sherring, 61 ff.; Greaves, 76 f.
[4] M. Sherring, 119.

her by erecting her image outside. He also promised that Kāla Bhairava should not lack human victims, and so ascetics used to hurl themselves over the rocks, a practice suppressed by the British in 1824—an aetiological story to explain the practice.[1] In the Panjab, again, Bhairon is much respected by low-caste Musalmāns because he is chief minister of the great Musalmān saint, Sakhi Sarwar, whose tomb is at Nigāha in Dera Ghāzi Khān District.[2] On the whole, the various developments of the cult of Bhairon are instructive, indicating the mode in which a rustic godling is promoted to divine honours.

Ganesa or Ganpati, 'Lord of the Ganas', or inferior deities, especially those in attendance on Siva, is son of Siva by Pārvati, or of Pārvati alone. He does not appear in the Vedas, where the title Ganapati is applied to Brihaspati or Jupiter, and it is very doubtful if he was a member of the epic pantheon.[3] His other titles, Vināyaka, Vighnesa, Vighnahāri, describe him as a 'remover of obstacles', the embodiment of good luck, and he is invoked as god of wisdom and patron of undertakings. He holds a higher position in Southern than in Northern India, and is known in Madras as the Belly god, a short fat man, of yellow colour, with a prominent belly, and the head of an elephant with a single tusk. He is generally depicted as riding on, or accompanied by, his rat. Many absurd legends have been invented to account for his association with these animals, but there seems little doubt that in his case the earlier worshipful animal has become anthropomorphic; but the new deity partially retains his animal form, a deity half-elephant, half-rat; the former typical of wisdom and strength to overcome obstacles, the latter guardian of the crops against vermin. Another and perhaps less likely suggestion is that Ganesa is a broken-down Dravidian sun god.[4] Like Janus, with whom his name has no etymological connexion, his image may be seen on city gates or temple porches, and if the door of a house opens on a side-walk, which is inauspicious, a little image of Ganesa is carved on the lintel to guard against ill luck. The door, in fact, stands in relation to the house as the boundary does to the village, marking

[1] Grant, 259.
[2] *P. N. Q.* i. 25; Ja'far Sharīf, 143.
[3] Macdonell, *V. M.* 101; *J. R. A. S.* 1898, pp. 380 ff.; *E. R. E.* vi. 175.
[4] *E. R. E.* vi. 176.

off the domains of the friendly house-spirits within from those of the hostile spirits outside. Hence it is necessary to protect, and sometimes a special godling guards it, like Dwāra Gosāīn, 'door-lord', or, as he is now called, Bārahdvāri, because it is supposed by the Bengal Mālis who worship him that he dwells in a temple with twelve doors. 'Whenever, from some calamity falling on the household, it is considered necessary to propitiate him, the head of the family cleans a place in front of his door, and sets up a branch of the tree called Mukmum, which is held very sacred: an egg is placed near the branch, then a hog is killed and friends are feasted, and when the rite is over the egg is broken and the branch is placed over the suppliant's door.'[1] We find instances of the propitiation of the gate spirit in the case of Ajīt Singh who, when he recovered his capital Jodhpur, slew a buffalo at each of its five gates, and human sacrifices used to take place at Vikramāditya's gate at Ujjain, but now only the heads of buffaloes killed at the last Dasahra festival are buried there, those of the last year's victims being then taken up.[2]

Gansām or Ghansiām, a Sanskrit form of Ghanasyāma, the dark clouds of the monsoon, used as an epithet of Rāma and of Krishna, is one of the chief deities of Gonds and allied tribes. He belongs to a different class from that of Ganesa because he was once a man who, like Dūlhadeo, was killed by a tiger soon after his wedding.

'Cut off at such a time it was unreasonable that his spirit would rest. One year after his death he visited his wife and she conceived by him, and the descendants of the ghostly embrace are, it is said, living to this day in the Central Provinces. He about the same time appeared to many of his old friends, and persuaded them that he could save them from the maws of tigers and other calamities, if his worship was duly inaugurated and regularly performed; and in consequence of this two festivals in the year were established in his honour; but he may be invoked at any time, and in all sickness and misfortune his votaries confidently appeal to him.'[3]

In Mirzapur in the United Provinces he is provided with a

[1] Dalton, 268; Risley, *T. C.* ii. 58. On the cult of Ganesa see *Indian Antiquary*, xxx. 255 f; *J. A. S. Bo.* vii. 479.
[2] Tod, ii. 1011; Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Dying God', 123 f.
[3] Dalton, 272: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 143; Giles, *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, ii. 277; *E. R. E.* xii. 590.

rude platform on which he can sit when so disposed, and the only offering to him is a Kalasa or water-pot and some rude clay figures of horses and elephants on which he rides. In the Mandla District, Central Provinces, a bamboo with a red or yellow flag tied at its end is planted in the corner of his shrine, an old withered garland is hung up, and a few blocks of rough stone, some smeared with vermilion, are strewn about the place. He is protector of the crops and in the month of Kārttik or November the whole village assembles at his shrine for worship, sacrifices of fowls, or of a pig occasionally, are offered with wine, and Ghansiām descends on the head of one of the worshippers, who is suddenly seized with a kind of fit, and after staggering about for a while rushes off into the wildest jungle, where it is believed that if not pursued he would die from starvation or become a lunatic. As it is, when he is brought back he does not recover his senses for a day or two. The idea is that he is thus selected as a scapegoat for the sins of the other villagers.[1]

A usual condition in such cases of possession is that the medium must fast for some time before the rite. In Bengal those castes whose widows abstain from meat and fish and take only one meal a day enjoy a higher status than those who live like ordinary married women.[2] The Bauri priest in Bengal must fast from meat and fish on the day preceding the sacrifice, and the Santāl bridegroom is obliged to fast on the day of his wedding.[3] The most important religious fast is the Ekādashi Vrata performed by Vaishnavas on the eleventh day of each month, when they sit up all night reading religious books and singing the praises of Vishnu.[4]

Strange, abnormal features in the scenery often become objects of veneration.[5] In Mirzapur District there is a rock in the form of a hideous, grinning skull, with enormous teeth, known as Dāntandeo, 'the demon with the teeth'; and elsewhere rocks of similar appearance are known as Lalita, 'the charming one', the euphemistic title of the sister of Kāli, who grins and inflates or blows up the bodies of those who do not pay her due respect. The same feeling is illustrated by the cult

[1] Grant, 276. [2] Gait, *C. R.* i. 368.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* i. 80 f.; Bradley-Birt, *An Indian Upland*, 267.
[4] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 201 f.; Dalal, *C. R. Baroda*, i. 120 ff.
[5] Cf. Westermarck, *M. I.* ii. 587.

of Dūlhadeo, 'the bridegroom deity', which is widely spread from the Central Provinces up to the hills which rise above the valley of the Ganges. He was one of the deified spirits of men suddenly slain before their desires were accomplished, and like others of his kind he should have become a Bhūt or malignant spirit. But he is now generally regarded as a friendly household godling. Stone pillars and rocks are often associated with his tragical fate. In the Narbada valley there are two such pillars, one rising in two spires, the other smaller and half a mile distant from the former.

'The tradition is that the smaller pillar was the affianced bride of the taller one, who was a youth of a family of great eminence in these parts. Coming with his uncle to pay the first visit to his bride in the procession they call the *barāt*, he grew more and more impatient as he approached nearer and nearer . . . they saw each other at the same moment. In that moment the bride, bridegroom, and uncle were converted into stone pillars . . . a monument to warn men and women against an inclination to indulge curiosity.' [1]

It is said that warned by this example the Gond bride now goes to her bridegroom to prevent a recurrence of this calamity. It has been suggested that the Hindu orthodox custom of the bridegroom coming to fetch his bride is a survival of marriage by capture,[2] but this view cannot be maintained, and the tale as it is told seems to point to the conflict between two forms of marriage: one, patrilocal, that usual in Northern India, where the bride is taken to her husband's house and becomes a member of his family; the other, matrilocal, based upon mother-right, in which the bride remains with her family, and is there occasionally visited by her husband.[3] The latter, the South Indian custom, may have been brought by the Gonds from their original home in the south, and when they settled in their present habitat there may have been a custom to adopt the former or Northern India rule. In the Mirzapur District Dūlhadeo presides over marriage, being worshipped in the family kitchen at marriages: when the sacred mixture of oil and turmeric is rubbed on the pair it is offered to him, and when two or three pairs of children are being married at the same time

[1] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 100 f. [2] Russell, *T. G.* iii. 73.
[3] Hartland, *Primitive Society*, chap. iv.

he receives an offering of a red goat and cakes, women gaining from him fertilizing power by sharing in the meal.[1] The worship is done, not by the Baiga or tribal priest, but by the eldest son of the family, thus marking the domestic character of the rite. Ghasiyas pour out oil and wine in the kitchen in his honour; Kharwārs worship him at the house hearth when a newly married pair come home, the goat for sacrifice being fed on rice and pulse, and the worshipper folding his hands says, 'Take it, Dūlhadeo!' after which the ashes of the fire at which the meat was cooked are not swept away with a broom but carefully removed, none being allowed to fall on the house floor.

In parts of the Central Provinces he is the household godling, represented by a piece of stone or metal kept in an earthen pot which is hung on the main beam, and he is worshipped yearly, only male members of the family being present. The representation of the godling is taken out, placed on a betel leaf, and food is offered to it. This is eaten by the persons present and anything that remains is buried.[2] In other parts of the Province he is worshipped at the Dīvāli or feast of lights, when a man becomes possessed: 'Dūlhadeo', they say, 'has come!' and he runs about, stretching at anything he sees. Two men catch him, fix peacocks' feathers on his neck and arms, and he dances in an excited way.[3] As a rule he abides in a corner of the hearth, and the animal offered to him must be a goat of dark colour; Baigas believe that he wards off disease and accidents, and he claims the offering of a chicken or a reddish-coloured goat.

[1] Cf. Russell, *T. C.* ii. 493. [2] Russell, *Bhandara Gaz.* i. 48.
[3] Nelson, *Raipur Gaz.* i. 74.

III

WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE TO THE GODLINGS

We proceed to consider the modes of worship of those deities revered by the peasantry.

When persons pass one of the village shrines they make a simple obeisance, joining their hands palm to palm, raising them to the forehead, or the sacred object and the forehead are successively touched with the right hand. In some cases an attempt is made to add to or improve the condition of the mound or shrine, as when in the south-eastern Panjab a person visiting the Jathera or sacred ancestral mound scrapes a little hollow in the ground near it and makes a second little heap.[1] Offerings made, usually by women, consist of corn, ghi or butter, flowers, water, or sometimes of a thick griddle cake and milk. But, particularly in the southern hill districts, a sacrifice is made. A castrated kid, a pig, or a chicken is brought to the shrine where the Baiga decapitates it with a single blow of an axe outside, and then taking the head inside lets a few drops of blood fall on the little knob on the clay platform which represents the godling. The head being thus sanctified cannot be eaten by the worshippers, and becomes the perquisite of the Baiga, the rest of the meat being then and there cooked and eaten in the presence of the godling by the worshipper and his friends.

Animal sacrifice was common under the older Brahmanism, when the body of the victim was consigned to the fire, and the motive of the act was that it should serve as an expiation for sins committed by the gods, the sainted fathers, or men.[2] Regard for animal life (Ahinsa), inculcated by Buddhism and by the Vaishnava sects which drew their inspiration from it, has tended to make animal sacrifice less common, except by the forest tribes and at shrines of Devi or other manifestations of the Mother goddess. Brahmans, at least in Northern India,

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 130.

[2] Monier-Williams, 23.

dislike blood-shedding, and a curious case is reported from the South Arcot District of a temple which contains two images, one of Kāli and the other of Mangalayāchi. The latter goddess disapproves of animal sacrifice, and while a victim is being offered to her sister goddess a blanket is held before her so that she may not see the act.[1] At the present day sacrifice is usually done as a measure of propitiation or expiation, and it is always expected that the god will grant some boon in return. It has been asserted that the sacrifice takes the form of a sacramental or totemic meal as is the case among the Semites and other races, but the evidence for its existence in India does not seem quite convincing.[2] Among tribes like Bhīls and Kolis the motive is usually propitiatory, the village godling being worshipped twice a year to secure protection of their flocks from tigers. The headman raises a fund out of which three goats, seven cocks, and wine are purchased. On behalf of the people he worships the godling, the victims are killed, fire is lighted, and into it the livers are thrown, the rest of the meat being cooked and eaten by the villagers.[3] When a Vāghri, in the hope of winning a wife, a son, or other success in life, makes a vow to the tribal goddess Vihāt, he buys a buffalo, tethers it at her shrine, and explains his need. If his prayer is answered the Bhuva or exorcist comes with a band of musicians, the other Bhuvas dance and roll their heads as if they were possessed, and the women sing songs describing the exploits of the goddess. On arrival at the shrine the Bhuvas beat the victim with the flats of their swords and knives, and if it trembles they are assured that it is accepted. Then the head Bhuva cuts off its head, and the other possessed Bhuvas leap forward and drink the blood from the wound, or catch it in their hands or in a cup. The Havan or Homa sacrificial fire is lighted in front of the Māta's or Mother's shrine, and pieces of the heart, liver, brain, and flesh are thrown into the flames, with an invocation to her: 'Mother! we offer this sacrifice for the good thou hast done and wilt still do! Suffer us to share in thy leavings! Are we not eaters of what thou hast left?' The raw flesh, including

[1] Thurston, *T. C.* vii. 210 f.
[2] R. Smith, 268 ff.; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 354 f.; *E. R. E.* x. 900.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 378.

the head, is divided equally amongst all present, and each takes his share to his own home or hearth, where it is cooked and eaten, and the bones are thrown on the roof of the shrine.[1]

Sometimes the victim is killed in brutal fashion, as it is supposed that this adds to the merit of the rite. Some of these practices have been suppressed under British rule, as in the case of the Lhota Nāgas, who used to beat a sacrificed bull to death as slowly as possible, but now they cut the skin over the heart and push a sharpened stick home.[2] Baigas in the Central Provinces allow the pig dedicated to Nārāyandeo, the Sun godling, to wander loose for two or three years, when it is laid on its back across the threshold of a doorway, a plank, on each end of which half a dozen men sit, is pressed across its belly, and the fore and hind legs are pulled backwards and forwards alternately over the plank until it is crushed to death, when all the men sing a sacrificial hymn. The head and feet are cut off, offered to the godling, and the rest of the flesh is eaten by the worshippers.[3] The Gonds sacrifice a pig in similar fashion, and at the feast of Buradeo, which is held at intervals of one or two years, the victims are stretched out on their backs and killed by driving a wooden stake through the belly.[4] In Chota Nāgpur 'two male buffaloes are driven into a small enclosure, and on a raised stage adjoining and overlooking the Raja and his suite take up their position. After some ceremonies the Raja and his family first discharge arrows at the buffaloes, others follow their example, and the tormented and enraged beasts fall to and gore each other whilst arrow after arrow is discharged. When the animals are past doing very much mischief, the people rush in and hack at them with battle-axes till they are dead.'[5] In Nepāl at the festival in honour of Bhairavi, the Mother goddess, the Banhras, professed Buddhists, sacrifice several buffaloes, and the Dharmis or masked dancers drink copiously of the blood as it issues from the bodies of the animals. The Newār custom of sacrificing whole herds of buffaloes at the Naurātra festival in honour of Devi or Durga is too brutal to be described.[6] The blood sacrifices at temples of Kāli or Devi in the plains are a disgrace to modern Hinduism, as is the case

[1] *Ibid.* 515. [2] Mills, 139. [3] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 85 f.
[4] *Ibid.* iii. 102, 103. [5] Dalton, 176. [6] Oldham, ii. 296, 346 ff.

at the shrine of Kāli near Calcutta, Kāmākhyā in Assam, Devī Pātan in northern Oudh, or at the rites performed by the Potrāja or buffalo-king in Kanara.[1]

As the Māta or Mother is a chthonic goddess it is the practice to bury the victim or portions of it in the earth. This practice is common in Southern India.[2] In some cases a pig is buried up to the neck at the entrance of the village and the cattle are driven over it until it is crushed to death, and rice stained with the blood of a sacrificed lamb is sprinkled over the head; Goāla herdsmen in Bengal turn a pig loose amidst a herd of buffaloes, which are encouraged to gore it to death, the merit of the sacrifice being thus conveyed to the cattle.[3] In the United Provinces at the death-rite of the Basors a pig is killed, its legs are cut off, and the body is buried in the courtyard in the belief that this prevents the ghosts of the dead, chthonic spirits, from giving trouble to the survivors: the chief mourner at the Dhangar death-rite cuts off the head and snout of a pig, saying, 'I have buried you here, never to come out, no matter how hard any Ojha or sorcerer tries to wake you!'; the Raja of the Gautam sept of Rājputs, when he makes sacrifice to Durga, the Mother, has the heads of the victims buried deep in the ground.[4] At the Kāndh Meriah sacrifice to the Earth Mother the priest buried the portions to be offered to her in a hole in the ground, and he did this with his back turned and without looking, for it is dangerous to deal with Durga.[5]

With the spread of Buddhism or Vaishnavism and the dawn of milder religious opinion, the blood sacrifice tends to be commuted. At a Jāt wedding in the Panjab a ram is hired from its owner, the bridegroom cuts off a small part of its ear, and makes a mark on his forehead with the blood.[6] At Baroda blood offerings are still made to the Mother goddesses, but some Hindus who object to kill an animal simply lay before the shrine a live cock, one of whose legs has been cut off, or a goat whose ear has been pierced, and then the animal is allowed to escape,

[1] Wilkins, *Modern Hinduism*, 253 ff.; Ward, ii. 125 ff.; *Oudh Gaz.* i. 370; Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 81; *J. R. A. S.* 1910, pp. 1165 ff.
[2] Whitehead, *Village Gods*, 52, 58, 59, 108, 111, 113.
[3] *Folk-lore*, xxviii. 154 ff.; Risley, *T. C.* i. 290.
[4] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 226, ii. 269, 406.
[5] Macpherson, 129.
[6] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 272.

or they cut a pumpkin in lieu of a victim, or cut off the ear of an animal or scratch its body, and sprinkle the image with its blood.[1] In Bengal at the festival of Sūrya, the Sun god, it was the custom to sacrifice pigeons and kids, the former being let loose to be scrambled for by the crowd, and the officiating Brahman pierced the kids' ears with a needle, and then the animals became the perquisite of the first person who touched them.[2]

The acceptance of the victim by the god is, as it has been already said, that at the time of sacrifice, when the divine afflatus enters it, it shivers. When Vāghris sacrifice a sheep to their goddess Vihāt it stands trembling before the shrine, the Bhuva exorcist scatters rice and yellow powder over it, breaks a coco-nut and pours some of its milk with palm-juice over its back, and when it shakes its head violently he knows that it is accepted.[3] When Bhotias sacrifice sheep and goats a man sprinkles water on them, and as soon as they shake their bodies to throw off the drops every one realizes that the godling has been gracious, they tear out some of the hair, and throw it towards the shrine, where it is dispatched.[4] Sometimes the acceptance of the victim is tested in a different way. When Musahars in Bengal sacrifice to their Bīrs or 'heroes', crossed swords are fixed on a plough-shaft and a stout stake, and on them the Bhakats or inspired devotees dance; if they pass this ordeal without injury the victim is accepted, and it is speared to death with a sharp bamboo stake.[5] It is also an omen of acceptance among Orāons and Gonds if the victim seems in some way to contribute to its own death, or if before being sacrificed it eats grain which has been dedicated to the godling.[6]

Human sacrifice appears all through the history of Hinduism.[7] It is to a great extent a question of life insurance, based in its primitive form on the theory of substitution, a life for a life. We find it in the Aitareya Brāhmana in the famous tale of Sunahsepa, 'Dog's tail', in which Raja Harischandra vowed, if she should have a son, to sacrifice his son Rohita to Varuna.

[1] Desai, *C. R.* i. 65 f. [2] Ward, ii. 53. [3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 516.
[4] C. A. Sherring, *Notes*, i. 113: cf. Thurston, *T. C.* iii. 466, iv. 59; Frazer, *Pausanias*, v. 237. [5] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 117.
[6] *E. R. E.* ix. 503; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 103: cf. Frazer, *op. cit.* iii. 27.
[7] H. H. Wilson, *Essays*, ii. 247 ff.; Barth, 57 ff., 203; *E. R. E.* vi. 849 ff.

But he escaped and Varuna afflicted his father with dropsy. Then a starving Brahman was induced to offer his son Sunahsepa as a substitute, but when he was bound to the stake he prayed to the gods, when the fetters of Varuna began to fall from him, and the Raja's dropsical swelling to diminish, until finally Sunahsepa was released and the Raja was restored to health.[1] In the eighth century human sacrifice is said to have been offered daily to Vindhyavāsini Devi, and many like instances have been collected.[2] As in the well-known Meriah sacrifice of the Kāndhs, human sacrifice was performed in Lāhul to benefit the crops, the people being required to find a victim in turn from slaves probably kept for that purpose.[3] Among Angāmi and other Nāgas and Gāros the practice of head-hunting is said to conduce to the prosperity of the community and the productiveness of the crops.[4] In the Central Provinces the Gonds were accustomed to offer human sacrifice to Kāli and Danteswari, the tutelary deity of the Rajas of Bastar, and even now the Jhādi Telengas will promise a human sacrifice to their godling, which they perform by procuring hair or a cloth belonging to some one else, washing it in water in the name of the godling, who may then slay the victim for himself and enjoy the sacrifice.[5] When the Kāmākhya temple in Assam was rebuilt in A. D. 1565, the Raja offered the heads of a hundred and forty men on copper plates to the goddess.[6] One of the most remarkable forms of the custom in recent times is that connected with the Tlen snake described in connexion with serpent worship.[7] The propitiatory form of the sacrifice appears in the case of the celebrated maker of artillery, Rūmi Khan, who is said to have killed his own son and baptized with his blood the great gun which he made at Bijapur.[8]

[1] Macdonell, *Hist. Sanskrit Lit.* 51: the occurrence of human sacrifice at the Rājasuya or consecration rites has been disputed; Macdonell–Keith, ii. 219; *J. R. A. S.* 1907, pp. 939 ff., 1895, p. 960: the tale of Sunahsepa is late, *ibid.* 1911, pp. 988 f.

[2] *J. R. A. S.* 1908, p. 778; *J. A. S. Bo.* iii. 275 ff.; Chevers, 396 ff.; D. Wright, 126, 130.

[3] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 91.

[4] Hutton, *Angami*, 159; *Man*, xxii. 113 f.; Hodson, *Naga*, 115 ff.; Playfair, 76 ff.; Mills, 230 f.

[5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 112 ff., 241 f.

[6] Gait, *C. R. Assam*, i. 80; *id.*, *J. A. S. B.* 1898, p. 56; *J. R. A. S.* 1910, p. 1187.

[7] Gurdon, 98 ff., and for human sacrifice at Jaintia, 102 ff.

[8] *B. G.* xxiii. 641.

Members of the Karhāda group of Brahmans gained an evil reputation in Bombay because it was alleged that they were in the habit of sacrificing their guests to their household goddesses, and it is said that some stigma still attaches to them and people object to drink water from their hands.[1] Even in recent times in the northern plains corpses have occasionally been found under circumstances which suggested a sacrifice to Kāli-Devi, but actual proofs of such ritual murders are not easily obtainable. Two revolting cases of child-murder recently occurred in the Nāsik District, the object being to secure male offspring; in one case one of the two women accused was childless, the other suffered from epileptic fits.[2] There can be little doubt that any relaxation of British law would lead to a revival of human sacrifice in some of its many forms.

Besides the instances already given of the commutation of this atrocious custom the following cases may be mentioned. When the Meriah rite of human sacrifice by the Kandhs was prohibited they craved permission to sacrifice buffaloes, monkeys, and other animals with the customary rites performed at the death of a human victim.[3] In the Central Provinces if a Mehtar scavenger dies within the lunar conjunction known as the Panchak, while the sun is in the houses of the stars beginning with the second half of Dhanishtha, or the Dolphin, to the first of Asvini, Aries, when certain things and certain acts are taboo, four images of dough in human shape are buried with the corpse; if this is not done it is believed that four fresh deaths will occur in the family.[4] Bhīls in Khāndesh 'kill bad luck' by making an image of a man, or of a man and woman, in the road dust; the image or images are covered with grass and straw, which are set on fire, and the tribesmen beat the images with much abuse and clamour.[5]

One form of human sacrifice, the foundation sacrifice, has deeply impressed the popular imagination. It is generally believed that one condition of the permanence of a great building, a bridge, or the embankment of a reservoir, depends on the sacrifice of a human being, whose ghost becomes the guardian

[1] J. Wilson, ii. 21 ff.; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 247; *B. G.* xv, part i, 132.
[2] Mead-Macgregor, *C. R.* i. 68.
[3] Macpherson, 179 f., 186 note 2: cf. Frazer, *G. B.*, 'The Dying God', 214 ff.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 221; B. A. Gupte, 189.
[5] *B. G.* xii. 87.

spirit of the structure.[1] Hence there is often a general scare when such works are started. The same is the case with the decennial census inquiries, one theory suggested for the enumeration being that the Government needs children for this purpose, or that it desires to reward the soldiery after a successful campaign with the gift of some pretty girls. In former times it seems to have been the custom to select the foundation victim from one of the menial castes. The great Raja Siddharāja Chālukya (A. D. 1094–1143) is said to have abducted a woman of the Od or navvy caste, but she cursed him that his lake at Pātan should never hold water, and it never did until Māyo, a Dheda scavenger, was sacrificed.[2] In 1789 when Nāna Fadnavīs, the Marātha statesman, was making additions to the fort of Lohāgad, he was warned in a dream that the walls could not be finished until the favour of the deity of the hill was secured by burying a man and a woman alive. After much difficulty a Marātha was induced to offer his eldest son and his wife as victims. They were buried alive and the foundations of the fort have stood firm ever since. The Marātha received as a reward the headship of a village, which his descendants in the fourth generation still retain.[3] Once upon a time, when a Raja was building a bridge over the river Jargu near the famous fort of Chunār, it fell down several times, and at last the Raja was advised to have a Brahman girl buried beneath the foundations. This was done and the bridge stood firm, but her ghost has become the Mari, or Cholera Mother, of the place, and when an epidemic is expected she must be propitiated with an offering of pigs and wine.[4] In the Deccan Chānd Khān, who was sacrificed in this way, has become a demon rather than a godling, and is worshipped in one bastion of every mud fort in the country.[5] At the building of the Arangarh fort in the Central Provinces a Baiga, who recommended the site because he had seen a hare beat off a dog on the hill, was killed and buried at the entrance of the fort, of which his ghost now acts as guardian.[6] With the same intention animals have been killed and buried.

[1] Cf. *E. R. E.* vi. 109 ff.

[2] Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 85: cf. *B. G.* iv. 303; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 323; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 144.

[3] *B. G.* xviii, part iii, 249.

[4] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 40.

[5] Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, i. 25.

[6] Brett, i. 208.

When the town of Chhindwāra was being built the founder let a goat loose and on the spot where it lay down he built a house and buried the goat under the foundations; a platform has been erected on this spot and the spirit of the animal is worshipped as tutelary guardian of the town.[1]

Such practices date from early times. In one of the Buddhist Jātakas the king's chaplain advised that 'a Brahman, tawny-brown and toothless, of pure blood on both sides, must be killed; his flesh and blood must be offered in worship', and his body laid beneath a new gate which the king was then building. The king accepted the advice of his chaplain, but the victim managed to escape, and the chaplain had a narrow escape from being offered in his stead, but Buddha interfered and had a dead goat buried under the gate as his substitute.[2]

In connexion with human sacrifice the strange tale of Momiāi may be told:

'In the province of Chorasan [Khurasān] they frequently find human bodies preserved in the sand, the flesh of which they sell under the name of mummy, for medicinal use; . . . in the Persian and Turkish languages the word *moum* [Persian-Urdu *mom*, "bees' wax"], from whence we have formed mummy [Arabic *mūmiya*, "an embalmed body", *mum*, "wax"], signifies literally a soft clammy substance, of the consistency of balsam . . . which is a sort of natural balsam distilling through the rock of a large cavern in the province of Lar, esteemed so precious that the Shah keeps it entirely for his own use, the doors of the cave being sealed by the Governor of Lar, who opens it only once a year, to take out the balm, the quantity of which seldom exceeds two ounces. A multitude of virtues are ascribed to it, particularly in the cure of fractures, in which it is said to perform wonders; but it may very well be doubted whether this was ever brought to Europe.' [3]

This stuff, some form of bitumen or rock oil, is held in high repute for its curative powers throughout the East. In India it is often called Nārāyan Tel or Rām Tel, 'the oil of Vishnu or Rāma'; it is supposed to cure wounds from swords, spears, arrows, and other weapons, and the possessor of it is deemed to be invulnerable.

[1] Russell, *Chhindwara Gaz.* i. 209. [2] *Jātaka*, iv. 155 ff.

[3] *A Description of Persia*, in Pinkerton, ix. 182: cf. Goldsmid, 589; Steevens, 152; Manucci, i. 55; Vigne, 64; Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 344; *J. A. S. Bo.* i. 154 ff.

Its name, Momiāi, or mummy, which connects the product with dead bodies, has given rise to the widespread story of the method by which it is prepared. The popular idea is that in order to prepare Momiāi, a boy, the fatter and blacker the better, is caught, a small hole is bored in the top of his head, and he is hung up by the heels over a slow fire. The juice or essence of the body dripping from his head produces seven drops of this precious substance. It is believed that a European gentleman, the Momiāi Sāhib, enjoys a monopoly granted by the Government of enticing away suitable boys for this nefarious manufacture. He makes him a magic stick or wand which compels him to follow him, and he then packs him off to some hill station where he practises his trade. A writer informs us that 'a very black servant of a friend of mine states that he had a narrow escape from this Sāhib at the Nauchandi or new moon fair at Meerut. The Sāhib had just put his hand in his pocket and taken out his stick, which was dry, shrivelled, and a span long, when the servant with great presence of mind held out his hands and said "Enough! Enough!", and thus intimidated the Sāhib went away into the crowd'.[1] This Sāhib is also known as Dānapurwāla; he forms the cantonment of Dinapur, but it does not appear how he is connected with it. In the plains most boys, particularly those who are dark and fat, believe themselves to be possible victims of the Momiāiwāla Sāhib, who frequents hill stations. When a gang of urchins dogs the steps of a European in a bazar it is enough to whisper 'Momiāi' to make them disperse in terror. Surgeons are naturally exposed to the suspicion of being engaged in the trade, and some years ago all the coolies in one of the hill stations struck work when an anatomist set up a private dissecting-room. Freemasons, too, whose lodges are known as 'Ajāibghar, houses of mystery', are looked on as sorcerers and magicians and are not free from the suspicion of being colleagues of the Momiāiwāla Sāhib.

Another substance known as Silājit, 'rock-conquering', a sort of solid resin resembling benzoin, the product of the tree *Storax officinalis*, is credited with possessing properties like Momiāi, and the term is extended to include various kinds of

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 190.

bitumen. It is regarded as a strong nerve tonic, and is said to be made of the flesh of Sidi or Sayyidi Habshi, Abyssinian boys, who are boiled down and the essence of their flesh extracted, while others believe that it comes from Egyptian mummies, and that it is only since this source of supply became exhausted that various bituminous exudations have been substituted for it.[1]

[1] Watt, *Econ. Dict.* vi, part iii, 385; Russell, *T. C.* i. 409, quoting Hooper, *J. A. S. B.* no. 3, 1903, p. 103.

IV

THE GODLINGS OF DISEASE

The village godlings, generally nameless, entrusted by the peasant with the control of all that concerns his simple life, come in process of time to be specialized and invested with separate functions; in other words, they become departmental deities. Among these special functions none is more important in a tropical climate where malaria is endemic and epidemics are rife, than the prevention and control of disease. The peasant is too ignorant to understand the necessity of sanitation, too indifferent and suspicious to seek medical relief. He regards disease from a fatalistic point of view, he believes that it is due to the agency of offended gods, of devils or demons, to witchcraft or the Evil Eye, and he thinks that it can be relieved only by some form of magic and avoided by the use of charms or amulets. Such ideas, with the spread of scientific measures for the relief of sickness, are gradually passing away amidst the peasantry of the plains, but they still flourish among some of the hill and forest tribes.

The following are examples of some of the more primitive forms of belief. Kolis attribute disease in men and cattle to some angry god or offended spirit, who can be controlled by a sorcerer or exorcist; when disease appears Vārlis send for a diviner who ascertains by magical means the cause of the attack, and when he becomes possessed the spirit explains through him the origin and remedy, no special treatment except sacrifices being used; Pahārias ascribe epidemics of small-pox and cholera to evil spirits who are brought into their country by the railway, and they can be exorcized by making a rude model of a train which the exorcist wheels away into the jungle; Orāons believe in a spirit called Murkuri, 'the thumper', and if a man is attacked by fever after he has been patted on the back by a European, he believes that Murkuri has passed from the European's body to his own; Hos attribute all disease in men and animals to the wrath of an evil spirit, or to the spell of a witch or sorcerer;

the Bhadbunja, grain-parchers in Bombay, when there is sickness in the house ascribe it to the ill will of one of their ancestors, make an image of rice-flour, cremate it with all the ritual of a funeral, mourn for ten days, and perform rites to appease the spirit.[1] In Rajputana disease is attributed to Khor, or the curse and wrath of dead ancestors, and they call in a Syāna or 'cunning man', who offer sweetmeats, milk, and the like to the offended spirits, and doses the patient with charmed ashes and black pepper.[2] Khāsis in Assam attribute sickness and other calamities to malignant demons, and seek to discover the person in whom the demon is embodied; Lushais believe that sickness is due to some Huai or demon, and all tales about Huais begin or end: 'There was much sickness in our village'; Nāgas ascribe mysterious illness to the breach of some Genna or taboo; Mikirs say that sickness, if long continued and severe, is due to witchcraft; Lhota Nāgas think that it is due to an evil spirit or to the wandering of the patient's soul, and the medicine-man extracts bits of earth, wood, or hair which the evil spirit has put into the body.[3]

Certain classes of disease, such as hysteria, dementia, epilepsy, consumption, or the delirium of fever, are naturally explained in the same way. In Jhānsi any one who falls down in an epileptic fit is supposed to have been thrown down by a ghost, or to be possessed by a devil.[4] Among the hill tribes of Bengal insanity is attributed to the anger of an evil spirit; Bhūmij suppose that it results from erecting a homestead or reclaiming land in an enchanted place or from having used timber cut in a sacred grove for roofing the houses; Hos deny that disease can be transmitted from father to son, and suppose that it is due to some personal offence or neglect, but they imagine that if a son does not appease the angry Bonga that has afflicted his father he also may be attacked after his father's death.[5] Gonds seem to have believed that people did not die unless they were killed by magic, but a distinction is often made between epidemic and endemic disease, the former due to a special evil

[1] *B.G.* xiii, part i, 171, 188; O'Malley, *C.R.* i. 206; Dalton, 199; Enthoven, *T.C.* i. 92.
[2] *Gazetteer*, i. 175.
[3] Gait, *C.R. Assam*, i. 260; Gurdon, 107; Shakespear, 67; Stack, 34; Mills, 79, 133.
[4] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 221.
[5] O'Malley, *C.R.* i. 415.

spirit or goddess, the latter to the unfriendly influence of some planet, god, goddess, or spirit.[1]

The horror felt regarding leprosy, the mystery of its origin and transmission, place it in a special category, and give rise to the belief that it is due to non-natural causes. A legend from the Panjab tells that the daughter of Vāsuki, King of the Nāgas, brought the Amrita, or water of life, to cure her father when he was attacked by the disease. When she rubbed it on his body she forgot his thumb, and when she went to get a fresh supply one of the Pāndava heroes carried her off and married her. So her father's thumb remained leprous, and that explains why the disease is still rife in the Panjab.[2] In Mathura it is attributed to telling lies in one of Krishna's sacred groves; Chāsas in the Central Provinces suppose that if they injure their totem animal they will be attacked and the family die, while many Hindus attribute it to the sin of eating beef.[3] Others, again, attribute it to the commission of some offence against the Sun, and the case is quoted of a Gujarāt poet who was cured by making submission to the Sun.[4] A common theory is that, according to the operation of the law of Karma or accumulated merit, it is the result of some heinous crime committed in a former birth, as blindness, dumbness, or lameness are caused by killing a cow, cursing a Brahman, and stealing a horse.[5] It is also connected in some way with snakes, for Nāgas tell of cures revealed by them.[6] The horror of the disease is increased by the belief that the sufferer is accursed and an outcast. In old days Gāros used to isolate him and make him very drunk in the last stages of the disease, when his house was set on fire and he and all his possessions were burned.[7] Hence many precautions are taken in disposing of the corpses of lepers. Bhotias cast them into water and retain no relic, not even a tooth.[8] This form of homoeopathic magic is practised also at Rajmahāl, in the belief that if the body was buried the disease would return and attack others.[9] The objection to

[1] Russell, *T. C.* i. 100; *B. G.* ix, part i, 365: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Dying God', 1 f.

[2] Temple, *Legends*, i. 414 ff.

[3] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 425, iii. 347.

[4] Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 44 note.

[5] Cf. Manu, *Laws*, xi. 49–53.

[6] Mills, 159; Hodson, 129.

[7] Playfair, 105.

[8] C. A. Sherring, *Mem. A. S. B.* 111.

[9] *Asiatic Res.* iv. 69.

cremation of such corpses is based on the theory that the contagion may be spread by the smoke of the pyre.[1] In Bengal it is said that the corpse is thrown into water in the hope that the sin that caused the disease will be washed away by the holy water, and this is done specially in the case of the poor who cannot afford to employ Brahmans for the performance of the Prāyaschitta rite done in the case of the rich. Rather more than a century ago a Bengal leper threw himself into a pit of fire: 'he believed that by so doing he should be transmigrated into a finer body.'[2] Hatis in Bombay think that leprosy is a disease which burns the body, and that as a second burning is not needed they bury the body; Gāros never burn a leper, but bury the corpse; Gaddis in the Panjab bury the corpses of those dying from typhus or leprosy, exhume them after three months and then burn them; Jhoras in Bengal, who usually cremate their dead, bury lepers, women dying in child-birth, persons dying of small-pox, and children who die before their ears are pierced.[3]

Bathing in holy tanks, as we have seen,[4] cures leprosy. Once upon a time a Raja was cursed by a Rishi saint that vermin should breed in his body, and he was cured by bathing in the Devrāshta spring, which rose out of the head of Siva when he slew a demon there.[5] The great Raja Bhoja, who was a leper, was told he would be cured if he bathed in the biggest lake in India. He was warned that the lake he intended to make should be fed by one stream for each day in the year. Unfortunately only 364 streams could be found until a Gond discovered that known as the Kaliasot, and then the Raja was healed.[6]

Hydrophobia is also much dreaded. Various streams in Bengal are famous for its cure. At one the patient fasts, defrays the cost of a special service, and receives a piece of red cloth impregnated with the snuff of a lamp-wick and secreted in the heart of a plantain. As long as he keeps this charm and abstains from eating this variety of plantain the effects of the bite are warded off.[7] At a village in Mathura there is a small brier

[1] Russell, *Betul Gaz.* i. 81.
[2] *Calcutta Review*, vi. 427; *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 22.
[3] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 71; Playfair, 105; Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 268; Risley, *T. C.* i. 347.
[4] p. 68, above.
[5] *B. G.* xx. 465.
[6] *J. R. A. S.* 1914, p. 315: for an account of the great Bhojpur lake see *I. G. I.* viii. 121 f.
[7] Risley, *T. C.* i. 365.

platform said to cover the grave of a dog to which persons bitten are brought to be cured.[1]

By a natural process of development the more common and fatal diseases are placed in charge of special godlings. The last epidemic of plague began in 1896, and two years later it appeared in Bengal. At Gaya it has now been apotheosized under the name of Plague Māī, Mother, or Bombāi Ki Māyān, the Mother named after the place where the epidemic began. In some villages she has been given a place in Deva's temple, and, like Sītala, the small-pox Mother, receives offerings.[2]

Small-pox, in charge of Sītala, 'the cool, chilly one', her euphemistic title based on the fever accompanying an attack, is the terror of mothers in a land where most children are unvaccinated, and an attack, often fatal, is a common incident in a child's life. She has other euphemistic titles—Māta, 'Mother'; Jagrāni, 'World Queen'; Phapholewāli, 'She who causes the vesicle'; Kalejēwāli, 'She who attacks the liver', the seat in popular belief of most diseases; Mahāmāi, 'Great Mother'. In Bombay Sītala Māta controls epidemic small-pox, while that supposed to be endemic is in charge of Sayyid Kāka, 'Lord Paternal Uncle', a title borrowed from Musalmāns. Momins propitiate both of them, the Sayyid when the child is actually seized, the Māta once a year in hope of protection. The latter is depicted as one of the Chandāla or outcast tribe, seated naked on an ass, which some interpret as referring to the slow motion of the disease, with a broken winnowing-fan on her head, a pad on which a woman rests a water-pot in one hand, and a besom in the other with which she sweeps the disease along. When she is worshipped she is represented by a clay image of a female riding on an ass, by a stone, or a piece of the screw-pine plant (*Pandanus odoratissimus*), to which are hung leaves of the tree and of a creeper, and to it milk, pepper-corns, flowers, and fruit are offered.[3] In Bengal, too, she rides on an ass, carrying a bundle of broomsticks with which she sweeps away the disease, an earthen pot under her left arm, and a winnowing-fan on her head. In Bardwān she has become more Brahmanized, a four-armed figure, like that of Durga,

[1] Growse, 169 note.
[2] O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 228.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 365 f.

seated on a lion, and her image is sometimes a piece of wood or stone studded with spots or nails of gold, silver, or brass, in imitation of the pustules. Or she is a white, nude figure, or merely a pot. The Pods regard her not merely as a godling of small-pox, but as their chief deity, and if a man is carried off by a tiger or his crops destroyed it is because he has incurred Sītala's displeasure.[1] In parts of the Central Provinces she is worshipped under the form of rough stones, indented like a honeycomb to represent the pitting of the malady, placed under a Nīm tree (*Melia azadirachta*), the medicinal powers of which are in such repute that even a leper can be cured by sitting in its shade.[2] In the Panjab she dwells in a Kīkar tree (*Acacia arabica*), and women may be seen watering the roots of the tree to cool those who are, or may be, suffering from the disease. Her shrines are little buildings generally erected by a Banya merchant as a thank-offering, and the ring of spots which form round the neck in a particular form of an attack are impersonated as Kandi Māta, 'Mother of Swellings'.[3]

Sītala, as a rule, receives little attention from men, but on her feast-day, known as Sītala Ki Saptami, 'Sītala's Seventh', or in Bengal Sītal Shashti, 'Sītala's Sixth', because it falls on the sixth day of the light fortnight of Māgh (January–February),[4] crowds of women and children visit her shrine. In parts of Bengal she is worshipped on a piece of ground, marked off and smeared with cow-dung. A fire is lighted and ghi and wine are thrown on it. The worshipper bows to the earth and mutters incantations, a pig is sacrificed, the bones and offal buried, and the flesh is roasted and eaten there and then, no one being allowed to take a portion home with him.[5] In the Marātha Districts of the Central Provinces a member of the family in the morning bathes an image of the godling in water mixed with Nīm leaves, and sprinkles it on the body of the patient. Cooked rice and curds are offered to the godling when the disease has abated. Chickens and goats are sacrificed and eaten, but some persons release them after dedication. A well-to-do man distributes coarse sugar to any one he meets

1 Gait, *C. R.* i. 192.
2 Russell, *Chhindwara Gaz.* i. 44.
3 *P. N. Q.* iv. 42; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 351 f.
4 B. A. Gupte, 224 f.
5 Risley, *T. C.* i. 179.

on his way to and from the shrine, but if his child is seriously ill he offers to distribute on its recovery its weight in silver, or he dedicates silver images of eyes to Sītala in the hope that his child's sight may be spared. Sometimes he offers up a blank sheet of paper, known as Tão, meaning 'fever', with a prayer that his child's face may remain as clean as the paper and may not be pitted.[1]

In Nepāl more drastic measures have been used. In 1800, when the Brahman mistress of Raja Ram Bahādur committed suicide because she lost her beauty after an attack of small-pox, the Raja wreaked his fury by destroying several temples dedicated to Devi in the Nepāl valley.[2]

In Tirhūt, on the first day of the Bengali year, a curious festival is held, called Jūr Sītal, *Jūr* meaning 'fever'. People bathe in water drawn the previous night and eat food cooked at that time after worshipping Sītala Devi. Then from morning till noon every one, rich and poor, cover themselves with mud, and shower it on all whom they meet, no one being exempted from this mud bath. In the afternoon they go out and hunt jackals, hares, or any animals they can find. When they return they boast of their valour in having killed this or that jackal, and hence a braggard is known as 'the sepoy' of the Jūr Sītal.[3] This is one of those annual hunts which subserve some obscure magical purpose, possibly a survival from the hunting stage of society, when it was thought expedient to perform at the beginning of the year a rite which would ensure good luck for the season. Every twelve years the Orāon girls hunt and kill a pig in a neighbouring village, and the men have a spring and summer hunt.[4] In the Central Provinces Bhātras perform a ceremonial hunt in March, which is followed by the consecration of the seed for the next sowing; Gadbas have a hunt at the same time, and on their return cook the game before Mātideo, godling of hunting, who lives in a tree.[5] The tribal hunt is the occasion in the year when Santāls act as a united tribe, holding a tribal session for the discussion of important questions.[6] Halvakki Vakkals in Kanara go on pilgrimage to Tirupati, and on their

[1] Russell, *Wardha Gaz.* i. 40 f.
[2] Oldham, ii. 235 ff.
[3] Grierson, *B. P. L.* 400 f.
[4] Sarat Chandra Roy, 226 f., 268 f.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 275, iii. 12.
[6] O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 475 f.

return keep Saturday as a fast and feed the brethren; on the first fair day after this feast the pilgrims with their caste-fellows armed with spears hunt the jungle, and feed on any deer or hog they chance to kill.[1] The spring hunt, known as the Aheria, was one of the chief festivals of the Rājputs.[2]

During an attack of small-pox the patient is supposed to be possessed by the godling, and care must be taken not to offend or disturb her. In Bengal her priest is the Māli or gardener, who begins by forbidding the entry of any meat into the house, as well as all food needing oil or spices in its preparation. He then ties a lock of hair, a cowry shell, a piece of turmeric, and a bit of gold on the right wrist of the patient, who is laid on a plantain leaf and fed only on milk. He is fanned with a branch of the Nīm tree, and every one entering the house is sprinkled with water. If the patient is restless the image of the godling is bathed in water which is given to the patient to drink. On the night between the seventh and eighth day, which is the crisis, a water-pot is filled with rice, flowers, fruit, and Nīm leaves, and the Māli recites a tale describing the exploits of the godling. When the scabs have peeled off, the things put in the water-pot are rolled up in a cloth, which is wound round the patient's waist, and then all is given to the Māli as his fee.[3] In Baroda no medicine is given to the patient, and the sight by him of a woman in the pollution of child-birth, of any person unclean or dressed in black is dangerous. Precautions are taken to shield the patient from the gaze of strangers, and his bed is strewn with Nīm leaves to avoid the risk of the shadow of any impure person accidentally falling on it.[4]

The severity of an epidemic at Jabalpur was once increased by the action of a banker. Accidentally, when washing and anointing an image of Vishnu, he let it fall and one of its arms was broken off. In his horror he tried to hang himself, but he was put under restraint, and the Brahmans advised him to take the image to Benares where he would be instructed how to appease the god. At that time small-pox was rife in Jabalpur, and his brother's only son was attacked. In defiance of the

[1] *B. G.* xv, part i, 205 f.
[2] Tod, ii. 660, and other references in his Index: cf. *E. R. E.* v. 20.
[3] Wise, 334: cf. Briggs, 139.
[4] Desai, *C. R.* i. 183.

taboo against journeying at such a time he started for Benares, with the result that his nephew and others died, and the blame for these misfortunes was laid on him. It is added to this story that Hindus do not cremate persons dying from small-pox, because the disease is not only caused by Devi, but is Devi herself, and to burn such a corpse amounts to burning the goddess, a belief common to other castes, like the Machhis of Bombay.[1]

According to one account, Sītala is one of seven sisters, who control pustular diseases, and Tipāras in Bengal worship seven godlings, six married and one a virgin, who preside over witch-craft.[2] One list gives the names of the sisters: Masāni, who deals with wasting diseases and is connected with the Smasāna or cremation-ground, whence she derives her name; Basanti, the spring godling, when small-pox is rife; Polāmdē, Lamkariya, Mahāmāi and Agwāni. Another list gives Agwāni, whose name is supposed to be derived from *āg*, 'fire', who causes fever; Chamāriya, connected with the Chamār or currier caste, who brings the malady in its worst form; Phūlmati, 'flower-like', who causes a mild type; Basanti and Lamkariya. In the Deccan seven godlings control various diseases: Pochamma, small-pox; Mariamma, cholera; Mutiyalamma, typhoid fever; Duggalamma, cough; while Bangāramma presides over gold; Mahishamma, buffaloes; and Ilamma is the general protectrix.[3] In the south-east Panjab Sītala is attended by Sedhu Lāl, her servant, who is often worshipped before her as an intercessor. The worshipper throws copper coins into her 'treasury' behind her shrine, in front of which rice and other food are laid and afterwards distributed to Chamār curriers and to dogs.[4] The shrines of her sisters cluster round that of Sītala, and they are known as her body-servants. There are also beside her little mud shrines erected by a grateful mother in honour of the special sister who protected her child during an attack of illness.

Devi, the Mother, who absorbs all these various potencies, often during the excitement caused by an epidemic develops into her sister goddess, the bloodthirsty Kāli. When cholera

[1] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 169 ff.; Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 399 f.
[2] Gait, *C. R.* i. 187, and cf. 192 for another list.
[3] Begbie–Nelson, *Chānda Gaz.* i. 82.
[4] *Indian Antiquary*, viii. 211.

broke out in the Jessore District, Bengal, in 1817, it was attributed to the occurrence in the month of August of that year of five Saturdays, the day presided over by the unlucky Sani. It was reported that magicians had been seen carrying away a human head, with orders to lay it in a certain place, and the populace was roused to prevent this from being done. One night some European officers chanced to visit a temple containing five images, one that of the formidable Aula Bībi, 'Lady Pestilence', who, dressed in a gown, rides about on a horse, but is usually represented by an earthen pot placed under a Nīm tree. In front of her image lay a girl stupefied with drugs, who was said to be in this way prepared to answer questions put to her by those who were initiated into the mysteries. But it was suspected that it was intended to offer her in sacrifice.[1]

Another dreaded disease godling is Masān, the impersonation of the Smasāna or cremation-ground. Siva delights in such places, and they are the favourite resort of witches. Black magic is practised there, and the chief ingredient in such charms is a piece of bone, ashes, or charred wood collected from the pyres.[2] In the United Provinces Masān is the name sometimes applied to the tomb of some low-caste man, a Teli or oilman, a Dhobi or washerman, both occupations being held in contempt as they are associated with dirt, and their ghosts are apt to develop into evil spirits. Masān specializes in causing wasting diseases, like consumption in infants, and envious women are said to introduce such maladies in the children of happy mothers by throwing on them a pinch of ashes from a burning-ground. This causes them to pine away under the influence of Sāya or Chhāya, 'the shadow', which falling on any one causes evil results. In the northern hills Masān is said to wander about in the guise of a bear or other beast of prey. When a person is possessed by Masān his friends invoke the benign house-spirit to 'come upon the head' of some person in the family, whereupon he and they begin to dance. At length one of the party works himself up into a state of frenzy, and starts belabouring the person possessed by Masān until a cure is effected or the patient dies under this drastic

[1] Chevers, 415 f.; Gait, *C. R.* i. 193. [2] Somadeva, i. 6, 159; ii. 240.

treatment.[1] In the Panjab when a child dies under an attack made by Masān its shroud is brought back from the grave to the house, washed, and carefully preserved, and when the next child is born it is laid on the shroud, and is thus protected from contracting this kind of disease.[2]

Minor forms of disease are also impersonated as godlings. Fever, one of the most common maladies, is averted by a vow to offer a mixture of milk, hemp leaves, and sweetmeats to Jūreshvar or Jwarahareswar, 'he that conquers fever', who has a famous shrine at Benares.[3] In Bengal this godling is known as Jwara Nārāyan, whose images, sky-blue in colour, with three heads, three feet, six hands, and nine eyes, is worshipped by the lower castes during an epidemic or after recovery by offering through a Brahman priest a sacrifice of goats, with rice, fruits, milk, and sweets.[4] Among Gāros Tatara-Rabuga, 'the Creator', attends to the cure of wasting diseases, like Kala Azar and other persistent fevers, and the Mikirs have special godlings who relieve fever, cholera, barrenness, and other diseases.[5] In Gujarāt, when a man is afflicted by constant fever, he goes out at night in the hope of meeting an owl, and he must make a knot in a thread every time he hears the bird hoot, the more knots the better.[6] Bengalis get rid of itch by setting upon a dunghill a black pot daubed with white, with a branch of the Ghentu or 'throat' tree (*Clerodendron infortunatum*), which has some medicinal qualities, and a broomstick, all of which represent the itch godling. Some doggerel verses are recited, the pot is smashed in pieces, and the patient is relieved.[7] In the lower Himalaya Ghanta Karan, 'he who wears bells in his ears', is worshipped in the form of a water-jar as the healer of cutaneous diseases, while in Bengal he is the consort of Sītala, the small-pox godling. He is now on his way to promotion to higher rank, as he is the gate-keeper in many Garhwāl temples, where he is worshipped in the form of a bell suspended on the top of some lofty mountain; the lonely goatherd or

[1] *Asiatic Res.* xvi. 137 f.; Atkinson, ii. 820; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 215.
[2] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 856.
[3] M. Sherring, 91.
[4] Gait, *C. R.* i. 194.
[5] Playfair, 81; Stack, 32 f.
[6] Stevenson, 259 f.: cf. *B. G.* ix, part i, 365 f.
[7] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 184; Ward, ii. 186; Watts, *Econ. Dict.* ii. 373.

zealous devotee rings the bell as he passes the spot.[1] The goddess who is enshrined at the temple at Kokamshān in the Ahmadnagar District specializes in the case of itch.[2]

Some of these godlings, like Shashti, described elsewhere, are specially interested in protecting children from disease. In the Hoshangabad District Bijaysen is responsible for the health of children, and strings in his name are hung round their necks from the moment of birth till marriage. Among the Korkus Kurdeo protects the growth and health of children in a group of three or four villages.[3] Acheri, a disease spirit in the lower Himalaya, specially favours those who wear red garments, and in his name a scarlet thread is tied round the necks of children to protect them from cold, goitre, to cure sore eyes and lingering diseases.[4]

Cholera, the disease most feared by the peasantry, is under the control of Mari, 'plague', or Mari Bhavāni, the latter title implying that she has been raised to the higher rank. A grim story is told of Safdar Jang, Nawāb of Oudh between 1739 and 1754, who, when he was building the town of Faizabad, received a robe of honour from the Emperor of Delhi. When he opened the box he found an image of Mari Bhavāni, and became so alarmed that he abandoned the site, where a fair is now held in honour of the goddess. In the Panjab, during an epidemic of cholera, two women were seen crossing a river in a ferry-boat, one of whom disappeared, and the other said she was on her way north. The people at once assumed that she was the Cholera Mother, who was leaving the District, but unfortunately the disease broke out again in the south.[5] In Kāngra she is propitiated by two rites, one the Pachbala, the sacrifice of five victims, a pumpkin representing a man, a male buffalo, a cock, ram, and he-goat, the heads of which must be severed by a single blow of a sword; the other, the Satbala, of seven victims, including the above five, and two human victims, a male and female.[6]

In Upper India the chief cholera godling is Hardaul, Hardiya, or Hardiha Lāla, the second son of Bīr Singh, Raja of Orchha

[1] Atkinson, ii. 816; Gait, *C. R.* i. 193; C. A. Sherring, *Mem. A. S. B.* 100.
[2] *B. G.* xvii. 722.
[3] Elliott, 255.
[4] Atkinson, ii. 833; C. A. Sherring, *Mem. J. A. S. B.* 101.
[5] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 107.
[6] *P. N. Q.* i. 1.

in Central India, who in 1602 at the instigation of Salīm, afterwards the Emperor Jahāngīr, slew the accomplished Abu-l-fazl, the historiographer of the reign of Akbar.[1] Jhajhar Singh, the elder brother of Hardaul, suspecting that he was engaged in an intrigue with his wife, compelled her to poison him at a feast. His horses and dogs died with him, and, like the hero, became dangerous ghosts. When his body was cremated a pole was set up to mark the place, and when his sister came to mourn him and flung her arms round the post it split in pieces as a proof that he recognized her. His ghost continued to wander until he was deified and worshipped. He is also the patron of marriage, and if he is duly propitiated and invited to attend he keeps off rain during the ceremony.[2] The terrible outbreak of cholera which broke out in the camp of the Governor-General, the Marquess of Hastings, during the Pindāri war of 1817, is generally attributed to the killing of beef for the British troops in a grove near a shrine of Hardaul. Rude shrines, with clay images of horses to serve as the hero's chargers, are erected in his honour.

In Bengal Raksha or Rakshya Kāli, 'the Preserver', is the goddess who controls epidemics. When disease appears she is worshipped at midnight, usually at a place where four roads meet, or at a cremation-ground, for which reason she is known as Masān Kāli, and when the harvest is unusually good a thank-offering is made to her. In former times she used to receive human victims. Others worship her at night at cross-roads, and the offerings presented to her image are thrown into a river or tank outside the village in the hope that the disease may be transferred elsewhere.[3] In Bihār during an epidemic the local exorcists march out in the direction of Kāli's shrine in Calcutta, followed by a crowd carrying pots in which incense is kept burning. As they march they shout, 'Victory to Mother Kāli!' and address her by her various titles. A sheep dedicated to her is driven with the procession, the members of which beg grain at the houses as they pass. These collections are passed successively from village to village. Few of the pilgrims succeed

[1] Smith, *Akbar*, 304 ff.
[2] *A. S. R.* xvii. 162 ff.; *J. A. S. B.* 1875, part i, p. 389; Sleeman, *Rambles*, 163 ff.; *N. I. N. Q.* v. 163 ff.
[3] Moberley, 241.

in reaching Calcutta, and on the way the sheep is killed and eaten by members of the lower castes.[1] Similar methods of passing on disease are common. At Nāsik the rite has now been taken over by Brahmans, who light a sacred fire with incense, ghi, rice, oil, flowers, and wood of holy trees, in honour of Kāli. Rice is cooked, laid on a cart with saffron and vermilion, incense is burnt, five torches are lighted, one in the centre of the cart, the others at the four corners, and a sheep is tied to a plantain stalk fixed in the cart. Then a woman of the menial Māng caste becomes possessed by the goddess, and announces whence she came and how long she intends to stay. The woman is bathed, richly dressed, and with her face veiled she marches backwards before the cart, supported by two men. Lemons are waved round her head to scare evil spirits, and are then thrown away. Musicians and a cheering crowd follow the procession. The cart is dragged a couple of miles beyond the place where cholera first appeared, to a place where four roads meet. There it is emptied, the sheep and the food are given to outcastes, and the driver of the cart and the woman are obliged to wait there till next morning, when they bathe and return home.[2]

The Patlia Bhīls in Central India hold a 'procession of health' in time of cholera. The Badwa exorcists become possessed by the Mother goddess, and chant songs all night in her honour. Next morning they fill a jar with food, a thread of many colours, a woman's tinsel forehead spangle, and the head of a freshly killed cock. Wine is poured over the jar, which is put in a small wooden toy cart and dragged to the border of the village, the Badwas following, twisting and heaving their bodies under the inspiration of the goddess. At the border the cart is taken over by men from the next village, and so it is passed on.[3] Dhodias in Bombay, when cholera comes, worship Samradeo, and carry an image of their goddess in a small cart made for the purpose. The image is worshipped with an offering of vermilion, silver coins are presented, and a fire burning in a clay hearth is fixed in the cart, behind which a devotee of the goddess follows, shaking his head. So it is passed on from village to village.[4]

[1] Gait, *C. R.* i. 193.
[2] *B. G.* xvi. 520 f.
[3] Luard, *Eth. Surv.*, art. 'Patlia', 49.
[4] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 334 f.

When cholera appeared in the Rājput State of Bundi the goddess Mari was banished.

'An equipage was prepared for her, decorated with funeral emblems, painted black and drawn by a double team of black oxen; bags of grain, also black, were put into her vehicle, so that the lady might not go forth without food, and driven by a man in sable vestments, followed by the yells of the populace. Mari was transported across the Chambal, with the commands of the priest that she should never again set foot in Kotah.'

The palace was guarded by streams of Ganges water dripping on the gate, but in spite of all precautions she returned and the Raja died.[1]

It is reported from the Central Provinces that on the principle of auto-suggestion much good is done by ritual of this kind by restoring the confidence of a panic-stricken population. But the rite must always take a communal form. The Baiga goes round and pulls a straw from every thatch, which he burns before the shrine of Khermātā, the village Mother, to whom he offers a chicken from every household. If this fails goats are substituted for chickens, and as a forlorn hope pigs are tried, and as a rule do not fail because by this time the epidemic has worked itself out.[2]

Khāsis take various precautions against cholera. They barricade the path leading to the village with palisades and bamboo *chevaux de frise*, leaving in the middle of the barricade a wooden door over which they nail the skull of a monkey sacrificed to the demons. If a person dies from an infectious disease the corpse is buried, exhumed later on, and cremated with all customary rites, when the fear of infection is over. Or they take measures to drive off the cholera demon.[3] Kachāris make special offerings to propitiate the demon, and flowers, eggs, rice, flour, and sometimes animals, such as goats, are exposed on rafts and set afloat in a river, the presence of such rafts always indicating an epidemic.[4] In the Himalaya Bhotias dose a dog with wine and hemp, let him loose, chase and kill him with sticks and stones, believing that after this rite no

[1] Tod, iii. 1733 f.: for disease transference in Bengal see Moseley, 240 ff.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 87. [3] Gurdon, 35, 137, 208.
[4] Endle, 39: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Scapegoat', 198 ff.

disease or misfortune will visit the village during the year.[1] With the object of driving away epidemics among men and cattle some Bhīls make their headman not to wear a turban, to give up shaving his head, and sometimes to put on a woman's clothes. Others make asses plough a small plot of land, or a cart is made which is said to move of itself when the Badva sings, and this carries away the plague.[2]

Sometimes the cholera demon is trapped by physical means. The Angāmi Nāgas tell of a tribe whose skin is double. Once upon a time when some Angāmis visited them they gave them a pipe of hollow bamboo, and told them not to open it till they reached home. When they opened it they found that the cholera demon had been contained in it, and when it came out it destroyed many men in the village.[3] It is reported from Bengal that a wise man, by the power of his magic, enticed the cholera demon into an earthen pot and tried to pass it on to the next village, but the plot was detected and a serious riot occurred when the attempt was made.[4]

Disease demons, like other evil spirits, can be scared by noise. In the plains when cholera is rife you will often hear gangs of men shouting, beating drums, and rattling brass plates to scare the demon and drive it beyond their boundaries, and a case is recorded of a coachman asking his mistress to allow him to pull in her horses to allow the demon to pass in front of them. Though it is occasionally a mere sign of rejoicing, this idea accounts for much of the drumming and discharge of fireworks which goes on at a wedding or a birth. When a Vasāva in Baroda dies a matchlock is fired and the corpse is carried to the burning-ground with music and gun-firing, apparently to frighten away the demons which beset the dead man's spirit.[5] In Gujarāt the gun-firing at a birth is now explained on the grounds that it will prevent the child from showing fear when he hears the report of a gun in after-life, but this is almost certainly a later idea.[6]

When cholera breaks out it is often attributed to witches, and a sorceress is employed to mark down the witch. About

[1] Atkinson, ii. 871.
[2] *B. G.* ix, part i, 311.
[3] Hutton, *Angami*, 263.
[4] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 68.
[5] Dalal, *C. R.* i. 507: cf. *E. R. E.* v. 93.
[6] Stevenson, *Rites*, 3.

a century ago a terrible outbreak of plague in Nepāl was ascribed to the fact that the Raja celebrated the Dasahra festival during an intercalary month, which is very unlucky; in another case because Sani, the ill-omened planet, appeared with other planets in the same sign of the Zodiac, and again because the Raja was in his eighteenth year and the cycle year was 88, because any year in which the number 8 appears is fatal.[1] Recently in the Dera Ismail District of the Panjab sickness was said to be due to the fact that a woman who had died some months before was chewing her shroud. It was determined to disinter the corpse, to place a copper coin in the mouth of the corpse, and a cock was killed and laid on her body. Similar results are believed to follow the burial of a sweeper face upwards, the normal position, not sitting or with the face downwards as menials should be buried, to prevent the ghost 'walking'. Sweepers are believed to be uncanny, and riots have occurred when they were buried like ordinary people. Gāndas bury males face downwards.[2]

Diseases are often checked in magical fashion. Some maladies are caused by the introduction through black magic of some foreign substance into the body. The Lhota Nāga medicine-man cures cough by extracting a lump of hair from the patient's throat, or he draws out the bits of wood which cause rheumatism. As this disease is connected with lightning, the splinters which he extracts are thrown near a tree which has been struck by a thunderbolt, a piece of iron is driven into the trunk, and an egg is presented as an offering.[3]

Epidemics of cattle disease are also attributed to spirits or demons. Not long ago a case was reported from the Gurgaon District, Panjab, of a man sleeping in the field who saw the demon in the form of an animal creeping towards his cattle. Watching his opportunity, he succeeded in catching the demon under his shield and refused to release him until he swore that he would not enter the village so long as his captor and his descendants lived there. To this day when murrain appears members of this family call on the demon to fulfil his contract. Gaddi herdsmen in the Panjab propitiate Gunga, the demon spirit of cattle, by setting aside in his name a bannock of bread until the regular offering can be made. Then a curved piece

[1] Wright, 221, 267, 268. [2] Russell, iii. 16. [3] Mills, 166.

of iron is made to represent the spirit, carried into the cattle-shed, and worshipped on a Thursday before the sacred fire. A he-goat is killed and a few drops of its blood are scattered on the iron, cakes are made and eaten by only one member of the family, what remains over being buried in the earth.[1] In Bengal Govind Rāwal was a cowherd who valiantly killed many tigers. After his death he was deified by the Ahīr or cowherd caste, and now when murrain attacks the herds he is worshipped with an offering of milk.[2] In the same province Kāshi Bāba is the godling of the Bind caste of farmers and labourers. Once during a serious epidemic when no expiatory sacrifices proved effectual, a clown went to bathe in the Ganges and saw a figure rinsing his mouth and making unearthly noises with a conch-shell as orthodox Hindus do. The lout, supposing him to be the demon of murrain, clubbed the unfortunate bather, who turned out to be Kāshināth, a Brahman. As the cessation of the plague coincided with his death, he has since been regarded as the demon who sends the plague, and as soon as it breaks out the village cattle are massed together, cotton-seed is sprinkled over them, the fattest, sleekest beast in the herd is singled out and severely beaten with rods, as a sort of expiation to check the plague.[3]

The godlings adopted by isolated groups of herdsmen and shepherds, to protect their cattle from murrain and the attacks of wild animals, are very numerous. The cult of Siva as Pasupati, 'lord of cattle', has probably been developed from a local worship of this kind, is now supreme in the lower Himalaya from Garhwāl to Nepāl, and has been adopted by the later Buddhism.[4] In the Central Provinces Gadaria shepherds worship Dishai Devi, protectress of the sheep-pen, which no man of the caste may enter in the morning wearing his shoes, and when he enters he makes obeisance to the sheep, customs which seem to indicate that Dishai is a deified sheep.[5] Gadbas worship Bharwān as guardian of cattle; Ghasiya grooms offer coco-nuts and wine to Ghāsi Sādhak, who lives near the peg to which horses are tied in the stable; the Golar godling Hularia protects cattle from disease and wild beasts.[6] Ghordeo, the Gond horse-

[1] Rose, *C. R.* i. 120.
[2] Gait, *C. R.* i. 197.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* i. 132.
[4] Atkinson, ii. 407, 465.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 6, 363.
[6] *Ibid.* 12, 30, 37.

god, protects horses; and Holera, the Hularia of the Golars, represented by a bullock's wooden bell, guards cattle.[1] Dudhera, the milk godling, is worshipped for the same purpose by Gowāris in the form of a clay horse placed near a white-ant hill, and if a cow's milk fails her udder is smoked with burning wood of the Sānwal tree which drives away the spirits who drink her milk.[2] In the United Provinces Ahīrs worship Bīrnāth, 'hero lord', who is said to be a man of the caste who was killed by a tiger and now protects their cattle in the jungle; Dhāngars worship a cattle godling, Goraiya, by sacrificing a pig and a white and black cock in the cattle-pen, and pouring wine on the ground, as he is a chthonic deity.[3] In the Panjab a boy named Birāglok was once killed while he was herding cattle, and now in Kangra, where vows for the protection of the herds are made at his shrine, he answers the prayers.[4] Chaumu and Budhān, the cattle godlings in the lower Himalaya, are now represented by Lingas, which indicates that they are on their way to promotion to become manifestations of Siva, and Bhar-chandi, the cattle protectress of the Thārus in the Tarāi, was originally a form of the Earth Mother.[5]

Exorcism of the spirits which bring disease on men or animals has become a regular profession among the peasantry. The methods are magical, of the homoeopathic or sympathetic type, and the exorcist is usually not a Brahman but a member of one of the lower castes who, as original owners of the soil, are supposed to understand spirits and their ways. He is called Syāna, 'the cunning one', Sokha, 'subtile', or Ojha derived from the Sanskrit *upādhyāya*, 'teacher'. In Bengal,

'whenever a person suffers from an illness presenting any unusual features, it is attributed to possession, and the remedy is sought, not in medicine, but in exorcism. The exorcist or Ojha is believed to have in his power a Bhūt (evil spirit) of greater power, and by means of Mantras or incantations he forces his own familiar spirit to drive away the one which is causing the trouble. Sometimes also he resorts to physical force, such as blows with a shoe or a broomstick, applying red pepper and turmeric smoke to the nostrils, and so on. In the south of Gaya

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 97.
[2] *Ibid.* 163.
[3] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 63 f., ii. 269.
[4] *Ind. Ant.* xxxii. 378.
[5] Atkinson, ii. 828 ff.; Crooke, *T. C.* iv. 399.

a Bhūt, when under proper control, is a valuable possession and a marketable commodity, the usual price being about Rs. 20. When the sale of a Bhūt has been arranged the Ojha hands over a corked bamboo cylinder which is supposed to contain him. This is taken to the place, usually a tree, where it is intended he should in future reside; a small ceremony is performed, liquor being poured on the ground, or small mounds erected in his honour, and the cork is then taken out, whereupon the Bhūt is supposed to take up his abode in the place chosen for him.'[1]

The rite of exorcizing an evil spirit, known in some parts of Northern India as Jhār-phūnk, 'sweeping and blowing', consists in waving over the person possessed a winnowing-fan or a branch of a sacred tree, while the exorcist blows upon him, thus communicating the afflatus with which he is endowed to the patient. Often the ritual is more elaborate, as in a case reported from Gujarāt, where a house was occupied by a dangerous Bhūt. A party of inspired members of one of the mendicant orders undertook the case. The house was surrounded with charmed threads, milk and water, and charmed nails were driven in at the four corners and the door. The house was then purified and a Deo or godling was established there, provided with lamps fed with ghi and oil, near which the exorcist took up his position and continued repeating charms for forty days. After this the house-owner became possessed, a condition which was produced by the exorcist scattering grain round him and beating a metal cup. A sacrificial fire-pit was made, and between it and the house-owner a lemon was placed, into which the Bhūt was adjured to enter. After some difficulty the lemon began to jump about, and it was understood that the Bhūt had occupied it. The exorcist then ejected the lemon, guiding its movements with a staff until it reached the village boundary, where the lemon was buried in a pit seven cubits deep, over it mustard and salt were poured, and over them dust and stones, the interstices being sealed with molten lead. It had been proposed to banish the Bhūt into the next village, but its residents energetically protested. The exorcist, it is true, assured them that there was no cause for alarm, and that if the Bhūt were properly buried and leaded down he would pine away and die in a short time.

[1] Gait, *C. R.* i. 198.

These predictions were fulfilled, for he was never seen or heard of again.[1]

The control of such evil spirits is assured by the use of certain Mantras or formulas, which every exorcist learns, and usually keep secret, unless he imparts them to his son or his successor in office. Naturally such rites are carefully guarded, and it is very difficult for a European to witness the rites, because spirits do not care to appear in the presence of persons of authority. In a case reported from Hoshangabad the man did not actually revolve when 'the god came on his head'. He covered his head in a cloth, leaving an opening by which the godling might enter his body, and in this state he twisted and turned himself rapidly, and soon fell exhausted. He excused the partial failure of the experiment on the ground that it was due to the presence of a European.[2] One Mantra runs: 'Bind the Evil Eye! Bind the fist! Bind the spell! Bind the Bhūt or the Churel (the spirit of a woman who has died in child-birth)! Bind the witch's hands and feet! Who can bind her? The teacher can bind her! I, the disciple of the teacher, can bind her! Go, witch, to thy shrine wherever it may be! Sit there and quit the afflicted person!' The ape-god, Hanumān, and two noted witches, Lona Chamārin and Ismāil Jogi, are often invoked to assist in the exorcism. Or the exorcist calls on Lord Solomon, who has mighty powers over the evil ones. In fact, much of the peasants' demonology and exorcism is used by Musalmāns as well as by Hindus.[3]

For each kind of cattle disease appropriate forms of spell or incantations are prescribed, and special charms are prescribed to relieve diseases attributed to spirits, such as hysteria, epilepsy, or insanity; for snake-bite, scorpion-bite, and hydrophobia; to save men and cattle from wild beasts; these make up much of the rural folk-medicine.

A distinction is naturally made between the spirits of the home, usually kindly if duly propitiated, and those from outside which are generally hostile. In the case of the former, when they are offended by neglect, conciliation is used; for the latter means are taken to repress and eject them. Some exorcists

[1] Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 658 f.
[2] Elliott, 120.
[3] Cf. Ja'far Sharīf, cap. xxvi.

fix charmed cloves on the patient's bed, and call on him to name the spirit which had possessed him. He usually names some dead relation, or the spirit abiding in a certain tree, hill, or cremation-ground. The exorcist often thinks it advisable to keep on good terms with the regular clergy, and though Brahmans do not often meddle with such rites, they accept the suggestion that a certain number of them should be fed as a means of intercession.

Dancing is also useful in exorcism, the theory being that a person roused to a state of ecstasy by the dance becomes himself for a time possessed by the spirit, and thus the patient is relieved. A good example is that given by Captain Samuells, who witnessed it among the Muăsis of Bengal.

'It comes like a fit of ague, lasting sometimes for a quarter of an hour, the patient or possessed person writhing and trembling with intense violence particularly at the commencement of the paroxysm. Then he seems to spring from the ground into the air, and a succession of leaps follows, all executed as though he were shot at by unseen agency. During this stage of the seizure he is supposed to be quite unconscious, and rolls into the fire, if there be one, or under the feet of the dancers, without sustaining injury from the heat or the pressure. This lasts for a few minutes only, and is followed by a spasmodic stage. With hands and knees on the ground and hair loosened, his body is convulsed, and his head shakes violently, while from his mouth issues a hissing or gurgling noise. The patient next evinces an inclination to stand on his legs, the bystanders assist him, and place a stick in his hand, with the aid of which he hops about, the spasmodic action of the body still continuing, and the head performing by jerks a violently fatiguing circular movement. This may go on for hours, though Captain Samuells says that no one in his senses could continue such exertion for many minutes. . . . If the treatment is successful the patient gradually and naturally subsides into a state of repose, from which he rises into consciousness, and, restored to his normal state, feels no fatigue or other ill-effects from the attack.' [1]

No doubt there is often fraud in performances of this kind, but the experience of Captain Samuells and other observers tends to show that this form of ecstasy is often involuntary. 'The sorcerer generally learns his time-honoured profession in

[1] Dalton, 232 f.

good faith, and retains his belief in it more or less from first to last. At once dupe and cheat, he combines the energy of a believer with the cunning of a hypocrite.'[1]

Among people of the lower culture beating or flagellation is a well-known means for expelling demons and relieving those who suffer from maladies attributable to them. As a form of penance, or with the hope of gaining inspiration, it is common in the lower Himalaya. A man has, when worshipping at a Nāga temple, been seen to apply the Sūngal or iron scourge to his own bare back till the blood ran down in streams and formed a pool on the ground; when applied by the officiant to the backs of the worshippers it is sometimes merely ceremonial, no blood being drawn, but when used by the penitents themselves the punishment is very real.[2]

As a means of expelling disease among the tribes occupying the Vindhyan range the Baiga uses his Gurda or charmed chain, which owes its potency to being made of iron, on hysterical girls or epileptic patients. It is kept hanging in the shrine and is held to be sacred. This may be compared with the golden chain which used to hang in the air without support at one of the shrines in Gilgit; when a case was to be decided by the oath of the parties, an appeal used to be made to the chain, which miraculously whirled round the neck of the man who was guilty.[3] During the Dasahra festival at Nāsik a body of persons follow the headman to a row of stones representing the Bīr or 'heroes'. The headman kills a buffalo with a stroke of his sword and the spirit of the Bīr enters one of their descendants, who is scourged with a hemp rope, after which the spirit leaves his body and enters that of the scourger.[4] An Orāon who becomes possessed by the godling Ganshām during the tribal dances is soundly beaten by the bystanders and quickly comes to his senses.[5] At Samlaji in the Mahikantha District possessed women sit in a river pool, while their friends splash them, cuff them, and beat them with twigs, all the while pouring out lavish abuse on the demons.[6] Beating is also effectual in expelling the spirit which causes barrenness in women, a belief which

[1] Tylor, i. 134.
[2] Oldham, 97 f., with a photograph of the scourge.
[3] Ghulam Muhammad, 112.
[4] *B. G.* xvi. 537.
[5] Dalton, 256.
[6] *B. G.* v. 440 note.

probably accounts for the ceremonial beating of bride and bridegroom during the marriage rites, a custom sometimes wrongly connected with marriage by capture. At a Kāyasth wedding in Bombay the bride and bridegroom are carried round the booth on the shoulders of their maternal uncles, probably because, being in a state of taboo, they discharge a force which would be dangerous if it touched the earth, and the object of the bearers of the girl is to give her a chance of striking the groom with one of thirteen oleander twigs, which the boy tries to snatch from her; among the Māngs the pair beat each other's backs with twisted waist-cloths; the Dhodia pair, when they go to the temple keep on beating each other with sprigs of the mango tree.[1] In the United Provinces the Kanjar pair are taken to a tank, and the bride strikes her husband with a cloth whip specially made for the purpose.[2] The custom of flagellating a girl on attaining puberty is not recorded, but it prevails among the Paraiyans of Madras.[3] The custom of beating as a mode of expelling evil spirits is illustrated by the rite at the Lion's Gate of the temple of Jagannāth, where, as the pilgrims pass, 'a man of the sweeper caste strikes them with his broom to purify them of their sins, and forces them to promise, on pain of losing all benefits of pilgrimage, not to disclose the secrets of the shrine'.[4]

The Ojha, though similar functions are sometimes discharged by a Brahman, is usually a member of a non-Aryan tribe. Sometimes his occupation is hereditary. In Hoshangabad District when a Bhumka dies, or a new village is founded, the people assemble at the shrine of Mutuadeo, and offer a black and a white chicken to him. A Parihār, one who is possessed by some godling, and through whose mouth he speaks, attends and makes the sacrifice. But if such a person is not available the oldest man present undertakes the duty. He sets a copper farthing rolling along the line of seated people, and the man before whom it stops is marked out by the order of the godling as the new Bhumka.[5] The Māli in Bengal select a person to act as tribal priest by getting a special divine who knows the

[1] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 332, ii. 189, 439; *B. G.* ix. part i, 66.
[2] Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 142.
[3] Thurston, *T. C.* vi. 93.
[4] Hunter, *Orissa*, i. 142.
[5] Elliott, 257.

will of the gods to balance a bow in his hands and to watch its oscillations, all the time calling out the names of the persons present, 'the idea being that the god thus signifies from whose hands he wishes to receive the offering'.[1] Mundas always choose from one family the Pāhān or priest of the village godlings, but change the holder of the office at intervals of from three to five years by sending boys round the village rolling a winnowing-fan, and the man at whose door it stops is elected.[2] Among the tribes on the Vindhyan range the right to the office of medicine-man depends on the appliances used in sacrifice and exorcism by his predecessor, the sacrificial axe and the charmed chain.[3]

The widespread custom of hanging rags on trees to relieve disease and other troubles is probably based on more than one line of thought, and in some cases the explanation is obscure. Sometimes it appears to be an offering of respect to the true spirit.[4] This explains the offering of rags at dangerous places such as river-crossings or cañon-bridges in the lower Himalaya.[5] Here the offering may be intended to win the support of a kindly tree spirit. At Kotah in Rajputana the shrine of the Bhīls is 'in the midst of thorny, tangled brushwood, whose boughs were here and there decorated with shreds of various coloured cloths, offerings of the traveller to the forest deity for protection against evil spirits.[6] Here we have also a method of gaining communion with the tree spirit by placing a particle of the suppliant's clothing in close connexion with it. In Berār a heap of stones painted with vermilion and placed under a tree fluttering with rags represents Chindiyadeo, 'Lord of Tatters', to whom if you present a rag in due season you may chance to get new clothes.[7] Such shrines are called in the United Provinces Chithariya Bīr, 'Rag Hero', and in the Panjab Lingri Pīr, 'Rag Saint'.[8] Conciliation of the tree spirit is probably the basis of a custom in Gujarāt. When people object to the felling of a tree they

[1] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 59.
[2] *Ibid.* ii. 106 f.
[3] On the regalia of the magician see Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 362 ff.
[4] *Ibid.* ii. 16, 32, 42.
[5] Waddell, *Himalayas*, 81, 115; *id.*, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 264, 286.
[6] Tod, iii. 1703.
[7] Lyall, *Gaz.* 191.
[8] O'Brien, 218; Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 312.

paint a figure of Siva's trident on it and throw a number of stones at its root. If stones be not procurable a bit of old rag is thrown so as to adhere to the tree, and every one who passes does the same. These places are called 'Rag Uncles', and they are very common in places where trees are scarce: 'people are much annoyed with the dread of touching them'.[1] A case is reported from Muzaffargarh in south-western Panjab which, if it is correctly stated, suggest another idea. The Lingri Pīr, or 'Rag Saints', are very common in the Thal or 'sandy tract'. To account for their existence far from any shrine it is said that they satisfied the want of women for a place of pilgrimage, and on the roads leading to shrines the rags are said to be placed as evidence that the vow has been performed. Pilgrims also tie knots in the grass of the roadside leading to a shrine, and a common form of making a vow is 'If you grant me my desire I will tie a knot to you', that is, I will visit your shrine.[2] With this may be compared the custom at the famous South Indian shrine of Tirupati:

'On the way leading up to the hill temple at Tirupati small stones heaped up in the form of a hearth, and knots tied on the leaves of the young date palms may be seen. These are the work of virgins who accompany the parties of pilgrims. The knots are tied to ensure the tying of the marriage tali string on their necks, and the heaping up of stones is done with a view of ensuring the birth of children to them. If the girls revisit the hill after marriage and the birth of offspring they untie the knot on the leaf and disarrange one of the hearths.'[3]

At Mathura stood the tree known as Vastra-harana, 'clothes stealing', where Krishna sat and stole the garments of the Gopi milkmaids as they were bathing in the Jumna, and forced them to appear unclothed before him—a tale which, as it has been suggested, may well be based on a rag-tree.[4]

Even if the habit of hanging rags on trees is not with the intention of disease transference, this custom in other forms is not uncommon. In Northern India during epidemics the Chalauwa or 'passing-on' rite is done. A little pile of earth, decorated with flowers, is often seen in the middle of a road

[1] Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 653.
[2] *Muzaffargarh Gaz.* 65.
[3] Thurston, *Notes*, 357.
[4] Growse, 59; on other Indian rag-trees see *J. R. A. I.* ix. 97 ff.

or at a place where four roads cross. On it are laid the scabs or scales from a small-pox patient, placed there in the hope that some one may contract the disease, and thus relieve the patient. This custom is also known as Dīvlī, or 'little light', because at night the pit is lighted. There can be little doubt that this custom, as well as that of mixing the scales with curdled milk and coco-nut juice and dedicating the compound on the platform of the Small-pox Mother, leads to the spread of the disease.[1] But in performing this charm a distinction is made: it is justifiable to place such things on the public road where, if his luck is bad, some one may chance to touch them and contract the disease; but it is wrong, as showing malice prepense, to lay them at a person's door where some member of the family is sure to touch them. The Orāons call the same rite Niksāri, 'something going out', like sweepings from a disease-infected house.[2] When a man is possessed by an evil spirit Gonds wave some coins and a lamp over his head, and bury the coins in waste ground, leaving one or two on the surface. If any one picks them up the evil spirit will possess him; if a Korku wishes to transfer his malady to another he gets hold of the latter's cloth, draws on it with lampblack two images, one upright, the other upside down, and when the owner puts on his cloth he contracts the malady.[3] A European friend of the writer was surprised when he was asked for the loan of a goose, which it was intended to lay beside a boy afflicted with bowel disease in the hope that it might be transferred to the bird. In the Panjab cattle disease is transferred by the rite known as Rora dālna, 'the flinging of pebbles or fragments of potsherds', that is to say, a buffalo skull, a lamb, pots of butter and milk, fire in an earthen pan, wisps of grass, and sticks of the Siras tree (*Albizzia lebek*) are carried to the boundary and thrown into the next village, a custom which naturally leads to riots.[4]

The use of a scapegoat is a development of such practices. At shrines of the Small-pox Mother sweepers carry round a young pig, and when the value of the animal is made up by the suppliants, it is driven by an excited crowd into the jungle and

[1] *P. N. Q.* ii. 42.
[2] Sarat Chandra Roy, 435.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 104, 563.
[4] *P. N. Q.* i. 64.

is supposed to carry the disease with it. When an epidemic of influenza broke out at Sāgar the Rāni asked permission from the British authorities that a noisy procession, which was expected to bring relief, might be allowed.

'Men, women, and children in the procession were to do their utmost to add to the noise by raising their voices in psalmody, beating upon their brass plates and pans with all their might, and discharging fire-arms when they could get them: and before the noisy crowd was to be driven a buffalo, which had been purchased by a general subscription, in order that every family might participate in the result. They were to follow it out for eight miles, when it was to be turned loose for any man who could take it. If the animal returned, the disease, it was said, must return with it, and the ceremony be performed over again.'[1]

Rope-riding, a practice in the lower Himalaya, has been classed as a scape rite, but this is doubtful.[2] In villages dedicated to Siva in Garhwāl, Bādis or rope-riders are employed to slide down a cliff on a rope, the performer being tied with thongs to a wooden saddle secured on a cable, while sand-bags are fastened to his feet to maintain his balance. A kid is sacrificed and then the rider is started, his pay being fixed at the rate of a rupee for every hundred cubits. The chief danger is that the rope may break, and to ensure its strength the Bādi makes the cable himself, its circumference being from one and a half to two inches. It is said that in former days if the Bādi fell off in the course of his descent he was cut in pieces by the spectators. After the ceremony the rope is cut into pieces, which the people carry off and hang as charms on the eaves of their houses, and the hair of the Bādi is believed to possess the same protective virtue. By this act the Bādi is supposed to secure fertility in the village lands, but by the performance he apparently exhausts his own fertility, for his fields become sterile and the seed sown by him never vegetates. Each district has its own hereditary Bādi, who receives annual dues of grain besides the special remuneration for the rite in which he plays the leading part.[3] According to another account, the rite is known as Badwār in Garhwāl, the name being derived from that of the performer,

[1] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 166. [2] Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Scapegoat', 196 f.
[3] Atkinson, ii. 834 f.

a Bādi Dom, who are professional beggars and musicians in the lower Himalaya.[1] He is bathed in the Ganges, rubbed with oil and turmeric, has his forehead coloured with turmeric and oil paste, and he is dressed in white, holding a white handkerchief in his hand. After the rite, in return for presents given to him, he pulls some hairs from his head and presents a few to each donor. Before he mounts the saddle he invokes his ancestors to see him safe during his descent, and to add to the force of his appeal he abuses them. The rite is now forbidden in British territory, and survives only in the Native States.[2]

Possibly in connexion with some rite of this kind in many places a godling known as Nat Bāba or Natni, a male or female member of the acrobat caste, is worshipped, apparently the ghost of a person who lost his or her life while performing on a rope.[3] At Lhasa a rite known as 'flying spirits' is performed, a hide rope being stretched from the top to the bottom of the Potala hill, down which men, resting their breasts on a piece of wood, slide down the incline; 'its object is to confer good fortune on the Grand Lama and his country, and the "flying spirit" appears to take the part of a good angel rather than a scapegoat, as he is feted and does not flee into retirement'.[4]

In the Panjab hills the rite is known as Bhunda, and the performer belongs to the Beda caste of musicians. The grass out of which the cable is made must be cut at a propitious time, and while the Beda is making it he must constantly perform ablutions. When it is made it is placed in a temple, and if any one steps across it he is fined a goat, which is sacrificed, and the cable must be remade.[5] No one may approach it while wearing his shoes or carrying anything likely to defile it, and it is worshipped as a Deota or godling. When it is being lifted out at every stage a goat or a sheep is sacrificed to it.[6] In Kulu the rite is known as Ganer, a word meaning 'a knot', and during the performance much dancing and singing of indecent songs go on.[7]

[1] Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 333.
[2] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 205 f.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* i. 57, iv. 289 ff.; Crooke, *T. C.* iv. 33.
[4] *J. R. A. S.* 1891, p. 209; Sarat Chandra Roy, 58 f.; Waddell, *Lhasa*, 397 f., who compares it to the rite of hook-swinging.
[5] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 423 ff.
[6] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 345 f.
[7] *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 1 f., 55 f.

The scapegoat rite survives among the Kharwārs of the United Provinces. When murrain attacks their herds they take a black cock, smear its head with vermilion, mark its eyes with antimony, and fix a spangle on its forehead and a pewter bangle on its leg—both significantly women's ornaments—and let it loose with the invocation, 'Mount on the cock and go elsewhere into the ravines and thickets! Destroy the sin!' The dressing of the cock like a woman suggests that in the more primitive rite a female victim was sacrificed. In the Panjab when cholera prevails they seize one of the village menials, usually a Chamār or leather-dresser, brand his posterior, and drive him out of the village.[1]

The same motive of the transference of evil has been traced in the custom of sin-eating.[2] When bad luck or some evil influence hangs over a Kanet village in the Panjab hills, the Deota or godling of the place is consulted through his Chela or disciple, who becomes possessed and advises a general feast, which is given at the temple in the evening. Next day a man goes round from house to house with a creel on his back, into which every family throws all sorts of odds and ends—parings of nails, pinches of salt, bits of old iron, or handfuls of grain. The villagers then walk round the village, at the same time stretching an unbroken thread fastened to pegs at the four corners. The man takes the creel to the river bank, empties the contents there, and a sacrifice is made. He receives half of the sacrificed sheep, and next night is entertained at every house.[3] This is apparently a commutation of a more primitive rite, in which the sin-bearer was held personally responsible, ill-treated or expelled from the community. Among the forest tribes of Baroda, at the worship of Vāghdeo, the tiger godling, a man covered with a black blanket bows before the godling, while all the men present slap him on the back. At his seventh turn round the shrine he runs towards the priest, while the children throw balls of clay at him, and then bring him back. The rite is followed by a feast.[4]

These rites are of the scapegoat type, but in others the sins of a dead man are transferred to his substitute by the eating of

[1] *P. N. Q.* i. 27.
[2] Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Scapegoat', 42 ff.; *E. R. E.* xi. 572 ff.
[3] Rose, *Gloss.* iii. 464.
[4] Dalal, *C. R.* i. 156.

food. The classical case of this is that at Tanjore, where at the funeral of one of the Rajas, a portion of his bones was ground to powder, mixed with boiled rice, and the compound was eaten by twelve Brahmans. This revolting and unnatural act had for its object the expiation of the sins of the deceased—sins which, according to the popular opinion, were transferred to the bodies of the persons who ate 'the ashes'.[1] Rājputs in Oudh who practised, or still practise, female infanticide, made their family priest cook and eat food in the room under the floor of which the child was buried. He was provided with the materials for cooking, and made a Hom or fire sacrifice; 'by eating it [the food] in that place the priest is supposed to take the whole Hatya or sins upon himself, and to cleanse the family from it.'[2] In the Ambāla District, Panjab, a Brahman stated that he had eaten food out of the hand of the Raja of Bilaspur after his death, and that, in consequence of this act, he had been seated on the throne for a year, when he was given presents including a village, was turned out of the kingdom, and apparently forbidden to return. Now he is an outcast, as he has eaten food out of a dead man's hand.[3] At the funeral of a Rāni of Chamba, when the corpse was being removed to the burning-ground it was conveyed over a high mound called Svargaduāri, 'the Gates of Paradise', to enable the spirit to depart in safety. At the burning-ground ghi and rice were placed in the hands of the corpse, a Brahman ate it in consideration of a present of money, and a stranger who had been caught beyond Chamba territory was given the wrappings of the corpse, a new bed, a change of raiment, and was told to depart and never show his face in Chamba again.[4]

Throughout Northern India the bed, clothes, and other belongings of the dead man are given to the Mahābrahman or funeral priest, the object being said to be that these things pass through him for the use of the spirit in the other world. But the contempt shown for this class of priests does not seem to depend only on his taking over things infected with the pollution of death. The feeling that he, in a way, takes over the sins of the dead man may contribute to the disrepute which attaches to

[1] Dubois, 366.
[2] Sleeman, *Journey*, ii. 38.
[3] *P. N. Q.* i. 86.
[4] *Ibid.* i. 93.

them. In the Central Provinces the Kattaka or Mahāpātra Brahman has to eat a quantity of cooked food for the use of the dead; he must finish the dish, and he takes advantage of this rule by stopping in the middle of the meal and demanding a present.[1] In the Panjab a Mahābrahman, known as Pretpāta, 'nourisher of the ghost', is fed and entertained for a year after a death, the period occupied by the soul in its passage to the realm of Yama. When he officiates at the funeral of a Raja of Mandi and the year has expired, he goes to Hardwār, receives a pension, and is never allowed to return to the State.[2] The funeral priest who acts for Chitpāvan Brahmans at Poona is given a bed, a maid, a packet of betel, an umbrella, and a stick for the use of the dead. Then he is carried on a bed some distance from the house, earth and cow-dung are flung at him, and the girl he received is redeemed at a price. Sometimes the chief mourner and his friends pelt the Brahman to such an extent that the police are obliged to interfere.[3] In the Central Provinces when a Kalangi girl gets maggots in a wound one of the Kusundi, a degraded group in her caste, has to give her water to secure her re-admission. This is a dangerous service because it renders the performer liable for the sin of the other which caused her pollution, and when no Kusundi is available five or seven men of other groups combine in performing the rite, because the risk is reduced when it extends to more than one person.[4] When an Orāon outcaste is being readmitted to caste privileges the Kartaka or officiant begins to eat the food prepared for the offender, but the moment he raises it to his lips all the persons present hurl their rice at his head, and when he comes home he is obliged to spend the fees received for performing this duty in feeding his own castemen, by which he atones for having eaten the food of an outcaste.[5]

The rite of sin transference thus assumes various forms, including its removal by a scapegoat, and the eating of the sinner's food. The final stage is reached among the Meitheis, where a man known as Chāhitaba, or name-giver for the ensuing year, bears all the sins of the people for that period, and his luck, good or ill, influences the luck of the whole community.[6]

[1] Nelson, *Bilaspur Gaz.* i. 104 f.
[2] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 134 f., 237.
[3] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 153 f.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 303.
[5] O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 473.
[6] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 101, 104 ff.; *J. R. A. I.* xxxi. 302: cf. *Folk-lore*, xx. 212.

V

THE KINDLY DEAD: THE CULT OF ANCESTORS: WORSHIP OF HEROES

No group of rites is more important in the religion of the peasant than those devoted to the placation or propitiation of his ancestors, the kindly dead. It is believed that after death the spirit, until its admission to the abode of the Blessed or final absorption into the World Spirit, is dependent upon the piety of its living descendants for the supply of food and other necessaries which enable it to accomplish the difficult and dangerous journey to the court of Yama, god of death. This journey lasts for the space of a year, and when the soul arrives at the court of Yama the evidence of the Karma or accumulated merit is produced by Chitragupta, the official registrar. If the dead man has during his life on earth accumulated a sufficient store of good works, it is sent to one of the Heavens of the gods, where it joins the company of the Pitri or sainted dead. But if the amount of Karma proves insufficient it is consigned to one of the many Hells, which the Hindu fancy represents as regions of incredible torment, or it is condemned to undergo a series of reincarnations by which it is purged of its offences.

But the peasant's conception of the fate of the soul is as vague and uncertain as the official teaching on the subject.[1]

'There is an important difference between the teaching of theoretical Hinduism and that of the popular religion in regard to the ideas of Heaven and Hell. In the former there are transitory stages of existence in the chain of transmigration, while in the latter it will not infrequently be found that there is an idea that the soul, when sufficiently purified, goes to dwell in Heaven for ever. So far as can be ascertained those who believe this regard Heaven as a place where the soul will dwell, surrounded by material comforts, in perfect happiness; but there is no idea of absorption in the Deity, whose place is far above, and the orthodox view of recurring cycles of existence or non-existence is not held by the peasantry.'[2]

[1] Hopkins, 229 ff.

[2] Burn, *C. R.* i. 77.

So long as a man is a good Hindu—a state of life, rather than a well-defined system of belief[1]—so long as he obeys the rules of the caste to which he belongs, duly marries his daughters, feeds Brahmans, performs pilgrimages, other considerations of morality do not greatly affect his mind, and his future is assured if only the relations whom he has left behind, on their part, perform the duty of attending to his wants in the other world. The soul when it leaves the body is regarded as weak and helpless, and the death-rites then resolve themselves into tendance rather than worship.

The series of rites by which the tendance of the soul is accomplished is known as Srāddha, 'faithful, believing', and it provides for the gradual building up of a new body, with all its limbs and organs, to serve as a shelter for the disembodied spirit.[2] The rites should be repeated annually to strengthen and sustain this new body, but, as a matter of fact, they are gradually discontinued as the memory of the dead becomes fainter and fainter; attention is concentrated on those who have recently departed, and those who have passed out of memory are commemorated only in vague, general terms as a collective group. Thus, in Gujarāt the death anniversary is kept up only for two generations.[3] In the lower culture the rites assume a purely animistic form, as when Kunbis in the Central Provinces make images of their ancestors in silver or brass, and when they become too numerous take them when they visit some sacred river and consign them to the water.[4] Dhanwārs in the same Province do not perform the Srāddha, but in the month Kuār (September–October), on the day corresponding to that on which his father died, a man feeds his caste-fellows in memory of him, offers libations to his ancestors, pouring a double handful of water on the ground for each one that he can remember, and then one for all the others, facing east as he does this, not turning to three different directions as Hindus do.[5] In Bombay Chambhār curriers install a coco-nut among the house gods in the names of relations; this is annually renewed, the old one being broken and the fragments distributed as Prasād or holy food.[6]

[1] *E. R. E.* vi. 698 ff.
[2] Stevenson, *Rites*, 165 ff.; *E. R. E.* i. 450 ff.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, Introd. xxvii note.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 39.
[5] *Ibid.* ii. 495.
[6] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 267.

Among the forest tribes and the lower castes in the plains the customs are infinitely varied. Khāsis make offerings to the dead sometimes periodically, and sometimes when they are needed in time of trouble, the service taking the form of offerings of food of which the ancestral shades are supposed to partake.[1] Nāgas in Manipur endeavour to lay the wandering souls of the dead by communal rites performed annually, and they do not therefore crave, as Hindus do, for male offspring, because the rites are the business of village or clan, not of the family.[2] Orāons perform in January the annual feast of the dead, called the Great Marriage because the bones of those who died recently are reunited to those of the older dead. These bones are treated differently according to the dates of the death of their owners, but in January they are collected, a banquet is given, and they are carried from house to house, each family pouring rice and wine into the jar which held the bones of the dead, and all are conveyed to a river where they are buried in the sands.[3]

Ghasiyas, a degraded tribe in the Vindhyan-Kaimūr hills, after a death feed the brethren, and spread flour and ashes on the ground at the door of the kitchen.[4] The son of the dead man goes a little distance along the road by which the corpse was carried away, calls him by name and invites him to partake of the offerings provided by his relatives. If he died in the normal way and not by the attack of a Bhūt or evil spirit, he will reply from the burial-ground, 'I am coming.' Then his son returns to the house, and if his father died in the ordinary way he will find his footprints, like those of a weasel, imprinted on the flour and ashes. His son sacrifices a white chicken and calls to his father's spirit, 'Come and accept the offering!' Before strangling the chicken he pours a little corn before it and says, 'If you are my father's spirit will you accept the corn. Sit in the corner and bless your offspring!' It is a good omen if the chicken eats the grain, but if it refuses it implies that some sorcerer or enemy is detaining the spirit, with the object of letting it loose on its own family some time or other, and if they have failed to propitiate it, it will molest them. If

[1] Gurdon, 109 f.
[2] Hodson, *Nagas*, 98.
[3] Dalton, 136; *J. A. S. B.*, lxii, part iii, pp. 12 f.
[4] See p. 231, below: cf. Russell, *T. C.* iv. 77; Mills, 130.

the spirit does not answer from the burial-ground or leave its marks on the flour and ashes, it is believed that some Bhūt has shut it up, and a rite must be performed to prevent its return.

Kharwārs, a tribe of the same class, make offerings to the dead in the month of Sāwan (July–August), consisting of chickens and cakes laid near the hearth, while the house-master calls out, 'Whatever ghosts of the holy dead may be in my family, may they accept the offering and keep our field and house free from trouble!' But this tribe is becoming rapidly Hinduized, and employ a Brahman to repeat texts while the house-master presents the offering, and they are now beginning to do the orthodox service at the Pitripaksha, or fortnight of the dead, in the dark fortnight of the month Bhādon (August–September). Even the degraded Doms in the plains have a death-service, bathe after the funeral, purify themselves by touching iron, a stone, or a piece of cow-dung, make an offering of rice and wine to the Manes, and on the tenth day slaughter a pig, cook and eat the meat, and drink raw spirits till they are all drunk.[1]

The custom of tendance of the spirits of the dead who have recently died is extended, as we shall see later on, to the reverence of the eminent departed, or some form of hero cult. But in the lower culture of Northern India the theories current about the state of the dead are so vague that they cannot be formulated. Gonds, for instance, seem to have no conception of a spirit-land, of a Heaven or Hell, and they seem to have believed that the spirits of the dead wander about their old home and are able to influence the lives and fortunes of their successors. But, possibly under Hindu teaching, they admit the fact of reincarnation, sometimes in children born in the family, sometimes as animals. But, like the Khāsis and other Mon-Khmer tribes, they set up memorial stones in honour of men of eminence, and families who have migrated often return to the parent village and erect their monuments.[2]

Observation of the likeness of persons of one generation to those who preceded them naturally suggests that ancestors are reborn in their descendants. The practice of burying dead children under the threshold of the house, in the hope that they may be reborn in some woman of the family, is based on this

[1] Risley, *T. C.* i. 248. [2] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 92 f., 96.

theory. Bishnois in the Panjab bury dead infants in this way in the hope of facilitating the return of their souls to their mothers, and others think that if a mother who loves her infant drops her milk on the ground the soul of the child will return to be born again, or it is supposed that if jackals or dogs dig up the body of an infant and drag it in the direction of its former home, it means that the child will return to its mother, but that if they take it in some other direction it will be reincarnated in some other family.[1] Some other Panjab castes lay a dead girl baby under a tree, and examine the place next morning to see if a wild beast has dragged the body towards its mother's house. If this should happen the mother thinks it is a bad omen and means that she will give birth to another girl, but if it is dragged away from the house she is glad and says, 'The brother will come.'[2] Such ideas of reincarnation prevail in the Central Provinces, but there is much variance of belief, some asserting that the dead in a glorified state inhabit some sort of a village on this earth.[3] Some Kandhs are said to believe that the reception of the soul of an infant into the family is completed only when it is named on the seventh day after its birth, and that if it dies before that time it is excluded from the circle of future female births in the family of which there is one less chance. As male children are specially desired this belief is said to be a powerful incentive to female infanticide, but the theory has not been traced among the tribes in the Central Provinces.[4] The fact of reincarnation is sometimes attested by physical marks. Gonds make a mark on a corpse with soot or vermilion, and if subsequently such a mark is found on a newborn child it is held that the dead man's spirit has been reborn in it.[5] The fact is also confirmed by an act of magic. Gopāls suspend a lamp from a thread, place the upper stone of a cornmill standing on the lower, call out the names of a series of ancestors, and if either stone moves at a certain name they conceive that he has been reborn, while Taonlas drop grains of rice coloured with turmeric into water, repeat the names of ancestors, and when a grain floats at the recital of a name they think that

[1] Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 299.
[2] *P. N. Q.* i. 51.
[3] Martin, *C. R.* i. 160.
[4] Thurston, *T. C.* iii. 387; Martin, *op. cit.*
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 94.

ancestor has become reincarnate.[1] Dhanwārs in the Central Provinces always ascertain from a wise man whether the soul of any dead relation has been born again in the child, and as it is thought that there may be a change of sex in transmigration, male children are sometimes named after women relations and female after men.[2] One of the best tests of reincarnation is that practised at the selection of a new Grand Lama, when the infants selected 'are confronted with a duplicate collection of rosaries, dorjes, &c., and that one particular child who recognizes the properties of the deceased Lama is believed to be the real re-embodiment'.[3] According to a popular legend, the Emperor Akbar was in a former life a Brahman named Mukunda, who carried out a course of austerities in order to induce Siva to make him an emperor. Siva refused to grant his prayer, but advised him to commit suicide at Prayag or Allahabad as a punishment for his overweening ambition. Mukunda agreed on condition that he might remember in a future birth the events of his present life. Siva agreed and Mukunda was allowed to record his memoirs on a copper plate and bury it at the sacred river Jumna. Years after he was reborn in the womb of Hamīda, mother of Akbar, who, when he ascended the throne, went to Prayag and dug up the plate, with the tongs, gourd, deerskin, and other properties which Mukunda as an ascetic used.[4] In Bengal, when a woman gives birth to several still-born children in succession, it is believed that the same child reappears on each occasion; to frustrate the designs of the evil spirit possessing the child, its nose or part of its ear is cut off, and the body is cast on a dunghill.[5]

The theory that the name is part of the personality suggests its connexion with reincarnation, and early writers lay down that a child should be named after his grandfather, great-grandfather, or great-great-grandfather. In the lists of Indian kings there are many cases where a grandson is thus named, but at the present day it is generally held essential to avoid

[1] *Ibid.* iii. 148, iv. 541.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 500.
[3] Waddell, *B. T.* 247: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 410 ff.
[4] *N. I. N. Q.* v. 197.
[5] Wise, 52: compare the custom of amputating the finger-joint of a child whose elder brothers or sisters have died, probably to induce the spirits to spare the child: Frazer, *F. L. O. T.* iii 241 f.

a name resembling that of an ancestor, living or dead.[1] Among Rajputs it sometimes happens that the birth-name begins with the same consonant or syllable as the appellation of some emperor or elderly relative, whom the social code forbids the child's mother to address by name; in this case a second name is given which the mother can use without a breach of family etiquette.[2] In Travancore, however, the eldest male child is called by the name of his paternal grandfather, and the first daughter by that of her paternal grandmother, as is the case among Tamil Brahmans.[3] On this question of naming Sir James Frazer believes that 'it is probable that in cases where a belief in the reincarnation of ancestors is either not expressly attested or has long ceased to form part of the popular creed, many of the solemnities which attend the naming of children may have sprung originally from the widespread notion that the souls of the dead come to life again in their namesakes'.[4]

The general cult of ancestors develops into that of persons renowned for their piety and virtue, or distinguished in some other way. In this class come the Sādhu, 'the perfected', sometimes identified with the Yogi or Jogi, holy men who by their austerities have gained Yoga or communion with the Divine.[5] Such a saint having performed during his lifetime his own Sraddha, there is no danger if the death-rites be omitted that he may become an evil spirit, but the anniversary of his death may be commemorated by a service at his grave. This place, known as Samādh, 'profound meditation', is a platform beneath which the holy man lies in a state resembling a trance. The tomb is marked with the impression of his sacred foot-prints, between which, in the case of Vaishnavas, a lotus flower, conch-shell, whorl or mace may be found depicted, or in the case of Sarvār it may be marked by a Linga, and a niche for holding a lamp may be provided.[6] The seat or bed of the saint is also venerated and kept unused. As the Sādhu is supposed to be in a condition of trance, the corpse is buried, not cremated. Rows of such tombs may be seen near Maths or hermitages of

[1] *E. R. E.* ix. 132, 165; Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 304: cf. Ja'far Sharif, 28 f.
[2] K. D. Erskine, iii. A. 98.
[3] N. Subhramanya Ayyar, *C. R.* i. 283.
[4] *G. B.* 'Taboo and the Perils of the Soul', 372.
[5] *E. R. E.* xii. 831 ff.
[6] *B. G.* ix, part i, 360; Stevenson, *Rites*, 200 f.

ascetics. Some are of more than local importance, and include those of worthies, like that of Kabīr, the poet, at Maghar in the United Provinces, who was half Hindu, half Musalmān, and is revered by followers of both religions; that of Dādu, founder of the Dādupanthi sect, a cotton-cleaner by profession, at Sāmbhar, where his relics are shown; of the great Brahman saint, Dnyanesvar, at Ālandi in the Poona District; of Zinda or Jinda and Kalyāna in the Panjab, and countless others.[1] Many tombs of Musalmān saints are venerated both by Hindus and followers of Islām.[2]

Many religious leaders or founders of sects have become deified. The Jain Tīrthankaras, saints who have obtained Nirvāna, are revered though they neither interest themselves in, nor influence, human affairs.[3] Nānak, the Sikh Guru, and Gurdatta, son of Guru Hargovind, are revered at their tombs or cenotaphs.[4] Rājputs venerate Deogi, who gave to Rāna Sanga the charm which ensured his victory, and a peacock's feather with which he raised the dead to life.[5] Dnyāndeva, the gifted Marātha Brahman poet, has been deified under the title of Dnyānesvar, and a tomb and temple have been raised in his honour at Ālandi in Poona District, as an incarnation of Vishnu, his two brothers of Siva, and his sister of the goddess Brahmi.[6]

The next link between ancestor worship and hero cults is that of the Sati or Suttee, 'the virtuous wife', who, until the practice was prohibited by Lord William Bentinck in 1829, used to immolate herself with her dead husband. Occasional instances of Sati are still reported, and it is certain that any weakening of British rule would lead to a recrudescence of the practice. The primary motive of the rite is to provide female attendants for the spirit of the husband in the next world, a custom which used till recently to appear spasmodically in the lower culture. The slave-holding White Karens of Burma used to bury alive slaves with their masters. A small hole was left in the grave through which the victim could breathe, and food was supplied to him for eleven days, after which if he could rise unaided from the grave he became a free man; Danus, if a dead man had

[1] H. H. Wilson, i. 103 ff.; *I. G. I.* Index, *s.v.* Tomars; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 391 f.
[2] Ja'far Sharīf, 140 ff.
[3] *E. R. E.* vii. 466.
[4] J. D. Cunningham, 42, 61.
[5] Tod, iii. 1817 f.
[6] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 193 note; xviii, part iii, 102 ff.

slaves, buried half of them with him.[1] It was a Thado, not a Lushai, custom on the death of a chief to send out a party to kill people, in order that their heads might adorn his monument, and their ghosts wait upon his spirit in the next world.[2] Other motives also contributed to the immolation of the Hindu widow: the desire of her husband's family to avoid the claims of a childless widow on his estate; to prevent the poisoning of husbands; the dread that the widow might be haunted by her husband's ghost.[3]

To judge from Indo-Germanic parallels, the custom was usual among families of the warrior class, and though it appears from a reference in the Atharvaveda that the widow burned herself or was burned by the relatives of her husband, it is not mentioned in the Rigveda, which seems to recognize the remarriage of the widow to the brother of her dead husband. The custom would therefore seem to have been in abeyance during the Vedic age, but it was revived on the rise of Brahmanism, when it was based on the misinterpretation of a Vedic text.[4] In later times the sacrifice was believed to purify the family of the father, mother, and husband of the widow, and if her husband died in a foreign land she was recommended to take his slippers or some other article of his dress, to bind them on her breast, and after purification to ascend the pyre.[5] The practice was common among Rājputs, as well as the terrible rite of Johar, when on the capture of a fortress the women burned themselves in the hope of escaping dishonour.[6] Akbar prohibited Sati, and on one occasion he personally interfered to prevent the death of a Rājput princess, when her sacrifice was demanded by the custom of the family.[7] Amar Das, the Sikh Guru, also prohibited it, and the Nambutiri, the most orthodox Brahmans of Madras, do not permit it or the shaving of the widow's head.[8] Jang Bahādur, the Nepaline statesman, used his influence in vain to prevent it, and on his death in 1877 several women were burned with his corpse.[9]

1 Scott–Hardiman, i, part i, 553, 564.
2 Shakespear, 60.
3 Tylor, *P. C.* i. 458 ff.; Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, i. 74, ii. 247.
4 Macdonell–Keith, i. 488 f.; *E. R. E.* viii. 453.
5 See Ward, ii. 298 ff.; Sleeman, *Rambles*, 18 ff.; Balfour, *Cyclopaedia*, iii. 781 ff.; Dinesh Chandra Sen, 975 ff.
6 Tod, Index, s.v. Sati, Johar.
7 Smith, *Akbar*, 226, 382.
8 Macauliffe, ii. 228; Thurston, *T. C.* iv. 189.
9 Oldfield, i. 251 f.

It was the custom that the Sati on her way to the pyre should mark the chief gateway of a temple or fort with the impress of her hand steeped in vermilion, or she impressed on a stone these marks which were afterwards made permanent by chiselling and were worshipped by her relations; marks of the kind were in quite recent times visible on gateways in Rajputana.[1] The methods of conducting the rite varied. In Northern India she usually sat beside her husband's corpse in a straw hut erected on the pyre which she set alight with a torch, and in Nepal she lay beside the corpse surrounded with inflammable materials, or if her courage failed she was forced into the flames by men who pressed her down with long poles; in other places, particularly in Southern India, fire was kindled in a pit into which she leaped.[2] A blessing given by a Sati on her way to death was highly valued, her curses brought ruin on those against whom they were directed, and in Mewār the most solemn of all oaths is that on a Sati.[3]

At many places in Northern India, particularly on the banks of rivers or tanks, little masonry shrines dedicated to a Sati may be seen, and they often take the place of, or include, those in honour of the Pitri or sainted dead. The shrine is often decorated with a rude carving in stone representing the husband and his faithful wife, one of her arms resting affectionately on his neck, or if he died in battle she stands beside him and his charger.[4] But the peasant is not careful about the object of his devotion, and one of the pillars of the Revenue Survey has been found doing duty as the shrine of some nameless Sati. Women come here and pray for boy babies or for the health of husbands and children, and when they thank the Sati for the favours they place on her shrine some cornstalks in the form of the lucky Swastika. Perhaps the finest examples of such movements are the memorials of uncertain date of the Mandi Rajas, bearing inscriptions recording the date of each Raja's death, and of the number of queens, concubines, and slave girls who were burned on his pyre.[5] Even more grim than these are

[1] Tod, i, Introd. xxxviii.
[2] *B. G.* xviii, part iii, 209; Barbosa, i. 213; Sleeman, *Rambles*, 19; Tavernier, ii. 209 ff.
[3] Tod, ii. 867, 1060, iii. 1477, 1657; *B. G.* viii. 637.
[4] Ibbetson, 115.
[5] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 196 f.

the graveyards in which such memorials, venerated by the Rājpuṭ, stand: 'each sacred spot termed "the place of great sacrifice", is the haunted ground of legendary lore. Amongst the altars on which have burned the beauteous and the brave, the harpy (Dākini) takes up her abode, and stalks forth to devour the hearts of her victims. The Rājput never enters these places of silence but to perform stated rites, or anniversary offerings of flowers and water to the Manes (pitri-deva) of his ancestors.'[1]

Other instances of self-dedication to the dead besides that of the widow may be mentioned. The immolation of a mother with her dead children seems now almost peculiar to the Panjab, but it is referred to in one of Somadeva's tales, in which a woman burns herself with her two dead children, but in answer to her husband's prayers Durga restores them all to life.[2] In the Nāsik District a tale is told of two Kunbi brothers who happened to see a woman approaching their field. Each of them asserted that it was his wife, but she was in fact their sister. They were so shame-stricken that they lighted a fire and jumped into it, and to complete the sacrifice their sister burned herself.[3] There are many cases of men sacrificing themselves after the death of a beloved lord and master. When the great Raja Harsha of Kanauj died his servants, friends, and ministers threw themselves over precipices.[4] The Arab geographers tell of an Indian king who, when he ascends the throne, has rice cooked and served to his bodyguard: 'all those who eat the rice are obliged, when the king dies or is slain, to burn themselves to the very last man on the very day of the king's decease'.[5] In the same category is the custom, common among Tamils and Nāyars of Southern India, of his subjects devoting themselves to death with their lord.[6] Somadeva, in telling a tale of the death and cremation of a king, says that 'the commander-in-chief could not bear the thought that the king's death had been brought about in this way, so he entered

[1] Tod, i. 88 f.

[2] Somadeva, i. 522 f.; *P. N. Q.* iv. 44 f.; *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 199; Temple, *Legends*, iii. 83; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 201.

[3] *B. G.* xvi. 642 note. [4] Bana, 161. [5] Elliot, *Hist.* i. 9.

[6] Kanakasathai, 139; Rice, *Mysore and Coorg*, 45, 171, 187; Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*, 19 ff.

the fire; for the actions of devoted followers are inexplicable'.[1] According to Procopius it was the custom of the Ephthalites or White Huns that when a patron died his clients were placed in full health and strength in his tomb.[2]

The close connexion of the Sati with the whole group of the sainted dead, men and women, is shown by the representation of the chthonic snake on her memorials, rising out of the masonry to receive the adoration of the descendants and typifying the ancestral spirits. Once upon a time in the Narbada valley three women became Sati, and as they were burning two great snakes ascended the pyre and were burned with them. The people were satisfied that these were two wives of the dead man in a previous birth, and when the Srāddha was performed the rite was done for six souls instead of four.[3] In the most degraded form of the Sati rite the Kaurs, a Bengal forest tribe, honoured a deified Sati by sacrificing a fowl annually and a goat every third year, this mode of placating their tribal godlings suiting ill with the simple offering of fruit, grain, or flowers which Hindus make.[4]

Persons who have died in battle, or have lost their lives in some unusual way, by accident or violence, are likely to become dangerous Bhūts and vex their descendants. The most eminent of these are often deified and worshipped by way of propitiation. The killing of a Brahman in particular is a deadly sin, and a tale is told of a Rājput prince who when hunting killed a Brahman by accident, and went to Chāndod on the Narbada to do penance. As he slept under a banyan tree he saw the Brahman passing by. Recognizing the man he gave him all he had and then burned himself on the river bank. His soul was wafted straight to heaven, and now any one who bathes there on the day the Rājput died is cleansed from all sin, even that of killing a Brahman.[5]

Many Brahmans who were killed by accident or design have been deified. In Bengal a childless Rājput once consulted a Brahman, who directed him to stand next morning at a certain cross-road and behead the first man he met. To his horror, he first man he saw was his Brahman friend. He would have

[1] Somadeva, ii. 321.
[2] *J. R. A. S.* xix. 201, xx. 148 f.
[3] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 29.
[4] Dalton, 138.
[5] *B. G.* vi. 161.

drawn back, but the Brahman warned him not to hesitate to follow his advice, merely stipulating that he should be installed as family god of the murderer. So the Rājput killed him and ever since he has been worshipped as a Brahm or Brahman ghost by the members of this Rājput's clan.[1]

One of the most important of these deified Brahmans is Harsu Pānrē or Harsu Bāba, whose cultus is now spreading rapidly from Bengal into Northern India. He was a Brahman, family priest of a Raja, one of whose wives was jealous of the Brahman's influence over her husband. She hinted to the Raja that his chaplain was planning to depose him, so the Raja caused his house to be demolished and resumed the rent-free lands which had been conferred on him. The enraged Brahman sat in Dharna, that is to say, he starved himself to death at the palace gate. When his friends took the corpse to Benares for cremation they found Harsu standing on the Burning-Ghat, and he told them that he had become a Brahm or malignant Brahman ghost. He blessed the Raja's daughter who had treated him kindly, but the Raja's palace was destroyed, and only the gateway at which the Brahman died remains to recall the tragedy. The present Raja's family keep a room reserved for him in the new palace, where pilgrims from far and near come to worship him with offerings of Brahmanical foods and sweetmeats. If any one gains his desires through his intercession he presents a golden cow and a silver waistbelt, and feeds Brahmans in his name. His speciality is the exorcizing of evil spirits which cause disease, and as they are held to be of low caste, they cannot withstand the power of the sainted Brahman.[2]

Ratan Pānrē, another holy Brahman, is worshipped by the Kalhans sept of Rājputs of the Gonda District in Oudh. The last of their Rajas abducted the daughter of the Brahman, who starved himself to death, and as he died cursed the Raja and announced that as his eyes had fallen in through hunger such should be the fate of his descendants, except the family of the junior Rāni who had urged him to break his fast, and they would all be blind. His ghost invoked the spirit of the Sarju river which flows near the fort, but she refused to revenge

[1] Gait, *C. R.* i. 199.
[2] *A. S. R.* xvii. 160 ff.; *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 38, iii. 38; Gait, *op. cit.* i. 199.

him and referred him to the Ganges, but she sent him back to the Sarju, who agreed to help him on condition that he got the Raja into his power by inducing him to accept a present. So he gave a sacred cord to the Raja's family priest, and asked him to invest his enemy with it. When the Raja examined the cord he asked whence it came, and when he learned the truth, flung it away in horror. But the mischief was done, and that night a great wave rose from the river, on which sat the wraith of Ratan Pānrē, and swept away the Raja's family and his palace. Only a deep lake now marks the spot, and the sudden changes of rivers flowing through alluvial soil suggested the legend.[1]

On the same lines is the tale of the Raja of the Hayobans clan of Rajputs in the Ghazipur District. Six centuries ago he seduced a Brahman girl, Maheni, a relative of his chaplain. She burned herself to death and as she died cursed the Hayobans sept. So much trouble beset them that they were forced to abandon the place. Her cenotaph is worshipped to this day, but no member of the guilty clan will dare to visit their ancient home, as no one will eat or drink near the cenotaph of Harsu Pānrē, because it is accursed on account of a Brahman murder.[2] Nearly a century ago a Brahman in Oudh who had been ejected from his lands, gathered a pile of cow-dung in one of the fields and lay on it till his flesh was eaten by worms. Since that day his fields are a waste of jungle grass in a sheet of rich cultivation, and neither Hindu nor Musalmān dares to plough them.[3]

A story of the same type is told in Rajputana. Udai Singh, Raja of Mārwār, fell in love with the daughter of a Brahman, a worshipper of Āyāmūta, the terrible Sākta form of the Mother goddess. To save her honour, the Brahman dug the Tāpi Bāori or 'well of fire', slew his daughter, and offered in the flames her flesh to the goddess. He cursed the Raja that he should die within three watches, three days and three years, and it was so. The Brahman's ghost again appeared to prevent an intrigue of Jaswant Singh, great-grandson of Udai Singh. Jaswant lost his senses, and recovered only through the devotion of Nāhar Khan, one of his officers. Some holy man exorcized the evil spirit which possessed the Raja, and caused it to enter a vessel of water, which they waved round Nāhar Khan's head,

[1] *Oudh Gaz.* i. 540 f. [2] W. Oldham, i. 55 f. [3] Baillie, *C. R.* i. 214.

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him and referred him to the Ganges, but she sent him back to the Sarju, who agreed to help him on condition that he got the Raja into his power by inducing him to accept a present. So he gave a sacred cord to the Raja's family priest, and asked him to invest his enemy with it. When the Raja examined the cord he asked whence it came, and when he learned the truth, flung it away in horror. But the mischief was done, and that night a great wave rose from the river, on which sat the wraith of Ratan Pānrē, and swept away the Raja's family and his palace. Only a deep lake now marks the spot, and the sudden changes of rivers flowing through alluvial soil suggested the legend.[1]

On the same lines is the tale of the Raja of the Hayobans clan of Rajputs in the Ghazipur District. Six centuries ago he seduced a Brahman girl, Maheni, a relative of his chaplain. She burned herself to death and as she died cursed the Hayobans sept. So much trouble beset them that they were forced to abandon the place. Her cenotaph is worshipped to this day, but no member of the guilty clan will dare to visit their ancient home, as no one will eat or drink near the cenotaph of Harsu Pānrē, because it is accursed on account of a Brahman murder.[2] Nearly a century ago a Brahman in Oudh who had been ejected from his lands, gathered a pile of cow-dung in one of the fields and lay on it till his flesh was eaten by worms. Since that day his fields are a waste of jungle grass in a sheet of rich cultivation, and neither Hindu nor Musalmān dares to plough them.[3]

A story of the same type is told in Rajputana. Udai Singh, Raja of Mārwār, fell in love with the daughter of a Brahman, a worshipper of Āyāmūta, the terrible Sākta form of the Mother goddess. To save her honour, the Brahman dug the Tāpi Bāori or 'well of fire', slew his daughter, and offered in the flames her flesh to the goddess. He cursed the Raja that he should die within three watches, three days and three years, and it was so. The Brahman's ghost again appeared to prevent an intrigue of Jaswant Singh, great-grandson of Udai Singh. Jaswant lost his senses, and recovered only through the devotion of Nāhar Khan, one of his officers. Some holy man exorcized the evil spirit which possessed the Raja, and caused it to enter a vessel of water, which they waved round Nāhar Khan's head,

[1] *Oudh Gaz.* i. 540 f. [2] W. Oldham, i. 55 f. [3] Baillie, *C. R.* i. 214.

whereupon the spirit seized him. As he died, Nāhar Khan bound his descendants by a mighty oath that they should renounce the hereditary office of premier of Mārwār, and since then it has been held by another sept.[1]

One of the Rajas of Almora in the lower Himalaya had two sons, one of whom fell into evil ways, and when he was disinherited his younger brother, Gyān Chand, succeeded. Many years after the elder brother appeared in the guise of a religious mendicant, and Gyān Chand procured a gardener to slay him and his pregnant Brahman mistress. The dead man became a Bhūt or evil spirit, and is now worshipped as Bholanāth, 'innocent lord', a title of Siva, of whom by and by he will become a manifestation. His mistress and her unborn child also became Bhūts and are particularly dangerous to gardeners. A small iron trident, the emblem of Siva, represents him, and it is placed in the corners of the peasants' huts to guard them against any sudden calamity.[2]

In the same locality Ganganāth, son of another Raja, quarrelled with his family and became a mendicant. He carried on an intrigue with the wife of an astrologer, who murdered the man, woman, and her unborn child. All three spirits became so troublesome that it was necessary to appease them by erecting shrines in their honour, and now when any one is aggrieved by a powerful enemy he appeals to Ganganāth, who promptly avenges him. He sometimes possesses one of his worshippers, and through him promises suppliants all they desire on condition that they make offerings to his ghost, his paramour, and her child.[3]

Rājputs are sometimes deified in the same way. Bhairavanand, a Rājput in Oudh, fell into a well and his two brothers refused to save him because it had been foretold that their rule would last so long as he remained at the bottom of the well. Members of his sept still make annual pilgrimage to the platform raised to commemorate him.[4] One of the Rājput heroines is the beautiful Rāni of Ganor, who, when captured in her fort by a Musalmān, to save her honour invited him to a banquet. She invested him with a poisoned robe of honour and plunged

[1] Tod, ii. 966 f.
[2] *Ibid.* ii. 819 f.
[3] Atkinson, ii. 817 f.
[4] *Oudh Gaz.* i. 285.

into the river from the battlement of her fort. She is worshipped as a local godling, and as the flesh of her conqueror was burnt from his bones, it is only natural that a visit to his tomb cures tertian ague.[1] Another form of deification is that of eminent writers.[2] Veda-Vyāsa, the arranger of the Vedas, and perhaps another of the same name who compiled the Mahābhārata,[3] has a shrine at Rāmnagar, opposite Benares, in the ill-omened land of Magadha,[4] where he established a Tīrath or place of pilgrimage.[5] Vyāsa is regarded as patron of the twice-born classes, and Brahmans came from far to his shrine at Pandharpur in the Sholapur District to worship his image.[6] Tukārām, the celebrated Marātha poet, is said to have been carried to the heaven of Vishnu in the god's own car, and is now deified.[7] A still more remarkable case is that of Vālmīki or Bālmik, the author of the Rāmāyana, who has shrines in many places, and by a curious feat of hagiology, Aheriyas and Baheliyas, hunting castes in the United Provinces, claim descent from him. Lāl Beg, the sweepers' godling, has been identified with him, and both these worthies are included in the strange quintet of godlings known as the Panchonpīr, or five saints.[8] The Rishi Parāsara, again, to whom some of the Rigveda hymns are attributed, who recovered the Vishnu Purāna, taught it, and wrote other books, receives divine honours. His career was chequered, for he was son of Saktri who was beaten by Raja Kalmāshapāda because he would not make room for him on a narrow path, whereupon the angry saint cursed the Raja to become a man-eating Rākshasa demon, and in revenge the monster devoured Saktri. In revenge his son Parāsara instituted a sacrifice to destroy the other Rākshasas, but the sages induced him to abandon the purpose, and he scattered his holy fire on the northern slopes of the Himalaya, where it still blazes forth at the phases of the moon, consuming Rākshasas, forests, and

[1] Tod, ii. 727 f. [2] Cf. Barth, 229.
[3] The Vishnu Purāna (trans. Wilson, 272 f.) names twenty-eight Vyāsas who arranged the Vedas.
[4] See p. 59, above.
[5] M. Sherring, 173; Greaves, 94.
[6] *B. G.* xx. 455.
[7] *E. R. E.* xii. 467; Grant Duff, i, Introd. lxvii f., 14 and note.
[8] *P. N. Q.* i. 1: Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 131 ff.; *Indian Antiquary*, xi. 290; Crooke, *T. C.* i. 46, 104; Temple, *Legends*, i. 529 ff.

mountains.[1] Dattatreya, the traditional author of the Tantras or works dealing with the literature of the Sāktas, worshippers of the female energy, regarded by Vaishnavas as an incarnation of Vishnu, and by Saivas as an authority on the Yoga philosophy, has shrines in the lower Himalaya and in Southern India.[2] The great deified Rajput saints are the Rishis Visvāmitra and Vasishtha, who officiated when the Agnikula or fire-born Rājputs were created from the fire-pit to aid the Brahmans against the heretics.[3]

Another class includes caste, sectarial, or tribal worthies. Jhāmbaji, founder of the Bishnoi sect, was an incarnation of Vishnu, and performed notable miracles; Ghāsidas, the leader of the Satnāmis in the Central Provinces, was also a miracle-worker, and his disciples drink as nectar the water in which his feet were washed.[4] Kāyasths, the writer caste, worship Chitragupta, the recorder who attends the court of Yama, and produces the record of each man's life at the Last Day.[5] Many worthies of this class are revered by Musalmāns, like Pīr Ali Rangrez, patron of dyers, and Hazrat Dāūd, or King David, by the Lohārs or blacksmiths, because it was he who taught the art of making mail armour.[6] In the Central Provinces carters have a godling of their own, Ongham Pat, who greases their cart-wheels and lives in a hollow at the foot of dangerous passes, where the drivers dedicate a little oil to him in the hope that they may accomplish the ascent in safety.[7]

The deified heroes of the forest tribes occupying the Vindhyan-Kaimūr ranges form a separate group. The chief of these is Raja Lākhan, who may be identified with Lakhanadeva, son of the heroic Raja Jaichand of Kanauj, who was killed in A. D. 1194 in battle with the Musalmān invaders under the leadership of Muhammad Ghori.[8] There is an inscribed pillar erected to his memory at Bhuili in the Mirzapur District, where he is best known, but it is strange that he, a champion of

[1] Atkinson, ii. 805; Dowson, 230 f.; Macdonell-Keith, i. 493; *Vishnu Purāna*, 4.
[2] *J. R. A. S.* 1909, 633 f.; Atkinson, ii. 805; *B. G.* xi. 302 f., xv, part ii, 296; Balaji Sitaram Kothari, 86 ff.
[3] Tod, i, Introd. xxxiii; *J. R. A. S.* 1913, 885 ff.
[4] Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 120 ff.; Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 110 ff.; Russell, *T. C.* i. 308, ii. 337 ff.
[5] Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 312.
[6] Korān, lxv. 80.
[7] *E. R. E.* iii. 314.
[8] Smith, *Oxford Hist.* 195.

a Hindu royal house, should have been deified by the jungle tribes, while his own people seem to do him little honour. His sister Bela, one of the fatal women, like Draupadi in the Mahābhārata, figures in the tale of the war in which Jaichand was killed, and she has a temple on the Ganges. Another hero of this war, strange to say, is a sweeper named Jokhaiya, who fell in action, and at his shrine in the Mainpuri District a sweeper, in consideration of a small fee, kills a pig and lets its blood fall on his altar. Ramāsa Pīr used to be invoked by the Pindāri bandit women when these marauders started on a foray, and his figure stamped in gold and silver was found hanging on the necks of many of their dead. Another personage of the same type is Rai Singh, son of a chief in the Narbada valley, who also was killed in battle: 'having in the estimation of the people become a god, he had a temple and a tomb erected to him.' A man suffering from quartan ague visited his shrine and was cured by his intercession, 'others followed his example, and with like success, till Rai Singh was recognized among them universally as a god, and a temple was raised in his name. This is the way that gods were made all over the world, and are still made in India.'[1]

One of the greatest of these deified men is Gūga or Gugga, known as Zāhir Pīr, 'the saint apparent,' or by another interpretation, Zahria Pir, 'the poisonous saint', because in his cradle he sucked the head of a snake.[2] He is also called Bāgarwāla because he reigned over the Bāgar or prairies of Northern Rajputana, and he has a place of pilgrimage in the Bikaner State.[3] The stories told of him are a mass of legend. By one account he was a contemporary of Prithivirāja of Ajmer who was killed in battle with Muhammad Ghori in A.D. 1192. Others say that with his forty-five sons and sixty nephews he fell in battle with Mahmūd of Ghazni. Another version is that he killed two of his nephews and was condemned to follow them into the lower world, but when he attempted to obey the order Mother Earth objected that he, a Hindu, could not enter her domains till he was properly burnt. This did not suit him because he was anxious to revisit his wife periodically, and

[1] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 95. [2] Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 121.
[3] K. D. Erskine, iii. A. 387 f.

so he became a Musalmān, and her scruples being thus removed Earth swallowed him and his horse alive.[1]

In the most elaborate version of the story he was the son of Bāchhal Rāni, and his sister gave birth to twins who were slain by Gūga. Bāchhal was a devotee of the saint Gorakhnāth and prayed to him for a son. After twelve years' austerities the Guru appeared, but her sister Kāchhal borrowed her clothes, personated her, and received from the Guru two grains of charmed barley, with the promise that on eating them she would be blessed with two sons. When Bāchhal learned from the Guru that she had been cheated she continued her austerities, and two years afterwards he gave her a piece of charmed Gur or coarse sugar which she ate, and from this Gūga, the son born to her, gained his name. But the Guru made it a condition of his favour that Gūga should slay the twins whom his aunt had gained by fraud. When he had slain them his mother, Bāchhal, ordered him to follow her, and so he disappeared. Some say he died in battle, others that he destroyed himself, and some declare that he went to Mecca where he became a disciple of one Ratan Hāji, 'the pilgrim', and that when he returned to his old home the Earth opened and received him and his famous black mare Javādiya, 'barley-born'. She too was born as the result of magic, for when Gūga, in one version of the tale, received the charmed barley-corns he gave one to his wife and the other to his mare, who gave birth to Javādiya.[2]

These legends give little clue to his personality. But he was probably a great chief who fought with the Musalmān invaders, and Hindu and Musalmān hagiolatry have joined in shaping his legend. Again, there is much that is chthonic about him, and it may well be that his legend has been worked up with that of an old chthonic godling like Bhairon, consort of Mother Earth. This is more probable as he is a great snake godling who cures snake-bite at his shrine, and both Hindu and Musalmān Faqirs take offerings made to him and carry his standard or Chhari from house to house and beg in August, when snakes are most dreaded.

[1] Ibbetson, 115 f.; Temple, *Legends*, i. 121 ff., iii. 261 ff.; Tod, ii. 807, 843, 1027, iii. 1452; *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 144.

[2] Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 120 f.; *Indian Antiquary*, xi. 33 f.; *A. S. R.* xvii. 159; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 171 ff.

Another village godling of the same type is Tejaji, who was a Jāt by caste, and is widely worshipped in Rajputana. One day while he was grazing his cattle he noticed that a cow belonging to a Brahman went daily into the jungle, and milk dropped from her udder into a hole occupied by a snake. To save the Brahman from loss Tejaji promised the snake to supply it with milk daily. One day he was going to see his wife at her father's house and he forgot to perform his contract. When he returned the snake told him that it was necessary that he should bite him. Tejaji admitted his right to do this, but asked to be allowed to bid farewell to his wife, and the snake gave him leave. On his way he rescued some of the village cattle from robbers and was sorely wounded. Mindful of his promise he returned to the snake as quickly as he could. But as his body was covered with wounds the snake could find no place to bite him. So Tejaji put out his tongue, and the snake bit him there and he died. Jāts believe that the bite of any snake will prove innocuous if the patient ties a thread round his right foot and goes on repeating the name of Tejaji. His image represents him as a man on horseback, holding a drawn sword, while the snake is biting his tongue, and nearly all Jāts wear round their necks an amulet engraved with his figure.[1] He also seems to be an old chthonic godling who has become the focus of later legend.

Besides the divine men of their own race and religion the Hindu peasant worships a number of Musalmān saints, the most important of whom are Bāba Farīdu-d-din Shakarganj of Pākpattan in the Montgomery District; Jalāl Jahaniān Jahāngasht of Uchh in the Bahāwalpur State; Bū Ali Qalandar of Pānipat in Karnāl District; Nizāmu-d-din Quliya, the saint of the Thugs, at old Delhi—all in the Panjab; Muinu-d-din Chishti of Ajmer; Shaikh Salīm Chishti of Fatehpur Sīkri, near Agra, and a legion of others whose tombs and Dargāhs or shrines are scattered over the land.[2]

But it is in the Pachpiriya sect, followed by masses of the peasantry, that hagiology has been pushed to its extreme limits. They, as their name implies, worship a quintet of

[1] Watson, *Gaz.* 34 f.; K. D. Erskine, *Gaz.* iii A. 83 f.; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 203.
[2] For details see Ja'far Sharīf, 140 ff.

saints or deified men, whose names differ from district to district, and form a most remarkable collection, including both Hindus and Musalmāns. They include Amina, a deified Sati; Bhairon, the old Earth godling; Kālika or Kāla—all on the Hindu side, and on the Musalmān saints like 'Ajab Sālār, Hathīlē Pīr, Rajab Sālār, and Sikandar Diwāna. In an incongruous animistic group are found Langra Tār, 'lame wire', represented by a crooked piece of wire; and Sobarna Tār, the bank of the river Subarnarekha, 'streak of gold', in Chota Nagpur. The cultus is chiefly confined to the lowest castes, the officiant being usually a Musalmān Dafāla drummer, who goes about with a party singing the praises of Ghāzi Miyan and his martyrdom, with other legends connected with him. Low-caste Hindus worship some five of these worthies in the form of five wooden pegs fixed in the court-yard of the house, and the Barwārs, a criminal tribe in Oudh, build in their houses an altar shaped like a tomb, at which the head of the family annually sacrifices a cock in the name of the Pīrs or saints, and offers cakes which are given to the Musalmān beggars who go about from house to house beating a drum.[1]

The cultus centres round Ghāzi Miyān, 'the honoured warrior who died fighting the infidel', who was an historical personage, Sayyid Sālār Masa'ūd, nephew of the celebrated Mahmūd of Ghazni. He led an expedition into Oudh and was killed in battle at Bahraich in A.D. 1034.[2] Near the scene of his martyrdom stood an ancient temple of the Sun, where he desired to be buried, and his head is believed to rest on the image which he gave his life to destroy. It is now impossible to analyse the complex of cults which centre round his name, a combination which admirably illustrates the eclecticism of the peasant, and his tendency to accept various beliefs which characterizes his religious system. His festival is known as the Bijāh or sacred marriage, and we may compare him with the band of youthful heroes, like Dūlhadeo and others, cut off in their prime in some tragical way. From another point of view his 'marriage' may be compared with that of other consorts of divinities like the Earth Mother, as indicating a fertility cult.[3]

[1] For full details see *E. R. E.* ix. 600 f.
[2] Elliot–Dowson, *Hist.* ii. 513 ff.
[3] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 120 ff.

Another worthy, Shaikh Saddu, has an equivocal reputation. He is identified with, or confounded with, Mīrān Sāhib, a magician, worshipped in many places. He is said to have gained the mastery over Zain Khān, a Jinn, whom he treated with much cruelty. One day the Jinn surprised his master in a state of impurity and slew him, but even in death he could not escape from the arch-magician, who rules him in the world of spirits. Mīrān Sāhib is said to have been buried at Ajmer, but he has a famous cenotaph at Amroha in the Moradabad District, United Provinces. By another account, the tomb at Amroha is that of Sadru-d-dīn or Shaikh Saddu, who was a crier to prayers in a mosque, and near him are those of Ghāziya or Ase his mother, and that of Zain Khān, the Jinn. But the tangle of his cultus cannot be unravelled. One thing is certain, that he is the special saint of women, who hold a secret Baithah or seance in his honour, at which they become possessed by him, fall into an ecstasy, do all kinds of strange acts, particularly with the object of obtaining children.[1]

Many of these divine men have attested their sanctity by miracles. These are performed at the tombs or shrines of the great Musalmān saints who are revered as much by the Hindu peasantry as by their co-religionists. Sakhi Sarwar once cured a camel's broken leg by riveting the bones together, and on the hill overlooking his tomb at Nigāha in the Dera Ghazi Khan District, Panjab, there once lived a terrible giant, who used to stand there at night and lure unwary travellers to their death. Sakhi Sarwar and his four comrades waged war against him, and all of them except the saint were killed, but he slew the monster, and so great was his fall that the hill trembled to the base. Baba Faridu-d-din Shakarganj, 'treasury of sugar', was so called because he possessed the Dast-i-Ghaib, or 'hidden hand', like the magical bag of world-wide folk-lore, which gave him anything he wished.[2] Any devotee who can crush into his tomb at the lucky moment during his festival is assured of entry into Paradise, and the crowd is so great that in spite of precautions taken by the police, deaths or serious accidents are not uncommon. At the Gerar hill in the Wardha District,

[1] Ja'far Sharif, 139; Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, 375 f.; *Dabistān*, ii. 234, 325; *Indian Antiquary*, xxiv. 125 ff.; Rose, *Gloss*. i. 638.
[2] Somadeva, i. 14 note, 571; Temple–Steel, 423; Knowles, 21.

Central Provinces, is the tomb of Khwāja Shaikh Farīd, and the zeolitic concretions found on the hill are assumed to be the petrified coco-nuts and other merchandise belonging to two merchants who mocked the saint, whereupon he turned their stock-in-trade into stones, but on their repentance he made a fresh collection out of dry leaves.[1] Bū 'Ali Qalandar used to ride about on a wall, and at Yennūr in the Dharwār District the saint Abdu-l-razzāq Qādere rode with a snake-whip in his hand on a scorpion-bridled tiger. But one day he went to meet the Bijapur saint, Khwāja Bandanawāz, whose little son mounted a wall and rode to receive the tiger-king. He was so discomfited that he died of mortification, and the Khwāja cursed his little son for causing the death of the holy man, and he too died.[2] Two holy men at Poona and Kolhapur used also to ride about on walls, and the saint Rājan Quttāl once rode on a wall from Delhi to Uchh with a snake in his hand which he used as a whip, and if you doubt the story the marks of his whip may still be seen on the glazed faience preserved on the wall at Uchh.[3] Wonders of this kind are readily believed by the peasant.

Miracles are constantly worked at the tombs of these worthies; in fact, a respectable tomb or shrine cannot become popular unless it can show wonders of this kind. Sayyid Yusuf, buried at Patna, appeared to a blind weaver who determined to kill himself rather than face poverty, and promised that he would recover his sight next day on condition that he searched for his tomb and proclaimed its virtues. It has since then maintained its reputation, and though it is a mere heap of clay without an endowment, the weaver and his descendants have flourished on the contributions of those who have found relief.[4] There is a tomb at Ajudhia in Oudh, known as 'Ilmbakhsh, 'wisdom bestower', to which children are taken to make them learn quickly, and another at Faizabad is known as Fazlu-l-haqq, 'the grace of God', at which sweetmeats are offered every Thursday to bring good luck.[5] It may be noted that wisdom may also be acquired by taking a plant of Soma (*Asclepias acida*)

[1] Grant, 197 f., 515.
[2] *B. G.* xxii. 789.
[3] *Ibid.* xviii, part iii, 104, xxiv. 318; Malik Muhammad Din, 163.
[4] Buchanan, i. 82 f.
[5] *P. N. Q.* iv. 143.

after fasting for three nights and reciting charms, eating it a thousand times, and drinking it infused in water for a year, or by drinking the fermented juice for a month.[1] At Ahmadabad the saint Mūsa Sohāg has five tombs, which are thus accounted for: the saint was reputed to be a successful rain-maker, and once when the rains were too heavy and the saint was asked to stop the downpour, he so disliked popularity that he prayed the earth to cover him. The king tried to dig him out, but four times he showed his head in a different place. At last the king tried to offer flowers to him, and this time his head appeared outside the mosque enclosure. So now he has five tombs, each erected at one of the scenes of his manifestation.[2] A tomb in Thāna District gained its reputation because the saint is supposed to have compelled the British to leave the place. The Peshwa sent a pall to cover it and ordered that the tomb should be repaired, but as there was some difficulty in finding materials the saint appeared in person, and without any help quarried and dressed the five blocks of stone which now cover his grave.[3] The tomb of Sayyid Sālār at Bahraich is held in high repute for the cure of blindness and leprosy.[4]

Some heroes share in the story of the Headless Horseman, a legend probably based on the custom of cutting off the head of a noted criminal to prevent his ghost from walking.[5] The head of the saint Hazrat Pir Zari was cut off in battle, but he went on fighting without it, and finally fell dead calling out 'Haq! Haq!' 'The Lord! the Lord!' and asking, 'Are not my enemy's villages turned upside down yet?' On this every village in his territory was overturned, except one belonging to a Brahman girl, and the ruins are there to authenticate the story. These tales of overturned villages are told of many ruins. One was destroyed because the Raja seduced a Brahman girl; another because of the fatal curiosity of the Raja who asked why the raiment of the saint Mīrān Sahib gave forth a divine perfume; a third because a Buddhist Raja gave a lady saint a dish of cooked rats, which came to life when she touched it; a fourth because a Raja afflicted by an ulcer used to kill

1 Somadeva, ii. 627.
2 *B. G.* iv. 281.
3 *Ibid.* xiv. 221.
4 *J. R. A. S.* 1911, p. 195.
5 Cf. *E. R. E.* vi. 537; *Calcutta Review*, ciiii. 158 ff.

a child daily as a cure.[1] The first Musalmān invader of Orissa was beheaded on account of ill success by his sovereign, but his mutilated trunk rode back to the fort, his head hovering in the air behind him. When he entered the gate he asked for betel, but the garrison refused to give it, saying that his head was so high in the air that it could not eat. 'Then it is not the will of Allāh,' said the lips, 'that my head should rejoin my body. Go back, therefore, O head of mine, and be buried in the king's city,' and so it was.[2]

One of these headless creatures, known as the Dhūndh, 'truncated', is greatly dreaded. Chamār curriers believe it to be the ghost of a Musalmān martyr, without head, hands, or feet, who rides about with his head tied on the pommel of his saddle, and calls outside the doors to people at night. Any one who answers him dies or goes mad, and when he is about people take care to keep indoors at night.[3] In Bengal the spirit of a man who has led a notoriously infamous life becomes a Bhūt known as Kandha Kāta, 'he who was cut off at the shoulders'. As he is headless, no Ojha exorcist can 'lay' him because he cannot hear his charms. He haunts marshy and lonely places, leads travellers astray, and unaccountable deaths are attributed to him.[4] This, as we shall see, is one of the reasons which cause the intense fear of decapitation as a punishment.

The curses of deified men are highly dangerous. A famous saint appeared at the great city of Valabhi, now ruined, in Kāthiawār, but no one, save a potter's wife, would cook for him. So he cursed the city and warned the potter and his wife to leave the city, and he adjured the woman not to look back. But when she reached the seashore she, like Lot's wife, disobeyed the order, and she was turned into a pillar of stone. At that moment Valabhi was destroyed.[5] The taboo against looking back appears in many tales: when the goddess Chandesvari was invited to come to Southern India she warned the Brahmans to walk in front and not to look back, but they disobeyed the order and she refused to move further; in a

[1] Führer, 69, 270; *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 21, 56, 189 f.
[2] Hunter, *Orissa*, ii. 10: cf. Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 249; *B. G.* viii. 436, xii. 457; *Oudh Gaz.* i. 308, 311.
[3] Briggs, 133 f. [4] Gait, *C. R.* i. 199. [5] Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 14.

Kashmīr tale the hero is warned not to look back lest he should be changed into a pillar of stone; mourners in Northern India on leaving the cremation ground dare not look back lest their souls may be detained by the dead.[1]

A remarkable type of tomb is known as Naugaza or Naugaja, because they are nine yards long, the extraordinary length of the tomb being considered to add to the dignity of its occupant. Several such tombs have been found in Rajputana and elsewhere. At Bālabāgh the tomb of Hazrat Lūt, the patriarch Lot, is 380 yards long; those of Aiyūb or Job, and Shīs or Seth are of a proportionate size; the Ghāzi, one who died in battle with the infidel, and the Shahīd or martyr, are honoured in the same way; one celebrity who was buried in the Peshāwar cantonment kept on growing till his tomb threatened to obstruct the thoroughfare, and the authorities were compelled to build a wall to keep him in.[2] It has been supposed that the nine-yard tombs date from the Buddhist period, but this is not certain.[3] They are naturally regarded with reverence, and bathing at one erected in the Panjab over a Musalmān worthy is supposed to cure barrenness.[4]

The peasant regards the European as an inscrutable personage, endowed with various uncanny powers. He respects his tomb sometimes from personal affection or fear, and he thinks that interference with it may disturb a dangerous ghost. At Benares the tomb of Major Kittoe, the architect of the college, is respected, and no one dares to lay his foot on the railing, much less on the tomb itself. At Murwāri in the Bhandāra District, Central Provinces, the tomb of Mrs. Clare Watson is kept smeared with turmeric and lime, and offerings are made to it in the hope of ensuring good crops.[5] At Sirur in Poona the tomb of Colonel W. Wallace, which he wisely provided with an endowment, is worshipped on Thursdays and Sundays in fulfilment of vows made for the cure of barrenness and other spirit-sent ailments; newly married pairs touch it to protect themselves from evil

[1] Thurston, *T. C.* vii. 171; Knowles, 401 with references; *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 10, v. 185.
[2] *A. S. R.* i. 98, 130, xiv. 40, xxiii. 63; Oliver, 135 f., with a photograph; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 622 f.
[3] *J. R. A. S.* xiii. 205; *P. N. Q.* i. 49, 109.
[4] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 209.
[5] Russell, *Bhandāra Gaz.* i. 40; *A. S. R.* xvii. 2.

spirits, incense is burnt, coco-nuts, sweetmeats, and sugar are distributed, and people who eat meat perform the Kandūri rite in honour of that model woman, Bībi Fātima, daughter of the Prophet, by killing a goat outside the graveyard, offering it at the tomb, and distributing the meat to beggars. The colonel's ghost is said to 'walk' at the new and full moon, and his reputation is said to rest on the fact that he captured one of the strongest forts in the Deccan.[1] In the same District the tomb of an Englishman has come to be known as Rāmdeval of the temple of Rāma, an old Ramoshi woman lives near it, pours water over it, keeps a lamp burning, and allows no one who has eaten meat that day to visit it, because she belongs to the Rāmbakht sect of her tribe, who worship Rāma and never eat meat.[2] The tomb of M. Raymond, a Frenchman, who built a gun factory at Hyderabad, is greatly respected. On the anniversary of his death the troops perform the 'honours of celebrities by illuminating the tomb, firing salutes, feasting on sweetmeats and reciting tales of his valour and benevolence'.[3] The ghost of Captain Cole, who was killed at Travancore in 1809, is propitiated by offerings of wine and cigars, and that of a bibulous official who died at Muzaffarnagar in the United Provinces with beer and whisky.[4]

[1] *B. G.* xviii, part iii, 447 f.; Grant Duff, ii. 380: on the Kandūri rite see Ja'far Sharīf, 138.

[2] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 413.

[3] Bilgrami-Wilmott, *Historical and Descriptive Sketch of the Nizam's Dominions*, ii. 802 f.

[4] *J. A. S. B.* i. 104; Sleeman, *Rambles*, 223 note; Thurston, *Notes*, 296.

VI

SPECIAL HERO CULTS

In the last chapter instances were given of the respect paid to, and the cultus of, eminent personages, Hindu and Musalmān saints, and even of Europeans. Here some more examples may be given of the belief in the protective powers of historical persons venerated on account of their piety, virtues, or heroism. It must, however, be remarked that the peasant of the present day pays little or no attention to some of the greatest figures in the national history. Alexander the Great, for instance, is well known as a worker of miracles and a mighty magician, but his reputation has been for the most part based on Musalmān tradition. Buddha, with the disappearance of the system he founded in the Peninsula, would have completely passed out of knowledge if he had not been taken over by the Vaishnavas, who adopted much of his beliefs and practices, as an incarnation of Vishnu. It illustrates the current ignorance of his life and work that many images of him or of other personages connected with Buddhism have been utilized by the peasant as representatives of the village godlings, female as well as male. Asoka or Harshavardhana, or, to come to later times, the great Musalmān kings or emperors except Akbar and his minister Bīrbal, have little place in popular tradition.

To begin with the heroes of the Vedic age, the great Rishis, saints or seers, regarded as men who once lived on earth, usually seven in number, are identified with the seven stars in the constellation of the Great Bear, and they receive worship as ancestors of the Brahmanic Gotras or section to which they gave their name.[1] Next come the heroes of the epic. Some of these, like Rāma, Sīta, or Krishna, have been included in the official pantheon, while others hold a lower rank. The Pāndava heroes of the Mahābhārata are closely connected with the Himalaya, because under orders from Vyāsa the sage they retired to the northern mountains after the Great War. Here

[1] Macdonell, *V. M.* 144; J. Wilson, ii. 13 ff.

in many places rocks or streams are venerated in connexion with their wanderings. At one place some grey granite boulders are said to have been thrown by them in sport, at another the finger-marks of Bhīmsen or the marks of the hoofs of his charger are shown, at a third the Pachīsi board on which they gambled.[1] There are two sets of his images at Benares, and one of the local fairs commemorates the fast of Bhīmsen.[2] It is remarkable that their cult is most widely developed in the south, doubtless because the immigrant Brahmans from the north brought it with them and desired to connect their Dravidian converts with the heroes of the Great War. There the village Mother is often called Draupadi, the common wife of the five brethren, and their worship, which has now adopted a purely animistic tinge, is regarded as a rival of that of Rāma or Siva, the Brahmanical deities, and Brahmans take no part in the service of the Pāndavas.[3] Further, in many places the Kistvaens, the work of some branch of the Dravidians, are known as Pānda Kuli, 'Pāndavas' shrines', and are attributed to a dwarf race which once occupied the Nilgiri Hills.[4] Kunbis in the Deccan worship six stones representing the five brethren and their mother Kunbi as field-guardians, and by a strange feat of hagiology Banavāsi in North Kanara is said to be the place where they spent the twelve years of their banishment from Indraprastha or Old Delhi.[5]

Next to Rāma and Sītā, one of the most famous is Hanumān or Hanumah, 'he with the great jaws', also known as Mahābīr, 'great hero', or Māruti, 'born of the winds', the great Langūr ape (*Semnopithecus entellus*). Some writers have tried to trace him back to Vrishā-Kapi, 'the excellent monkey', favourite of Indra in the Rigveda, but he does not appear to have been the object of a special cult,[6] and to say that the cult of the ape is based on the Veda or the Rāmāyana, when in the latter he helps to recover Sītā for Rāma, is 'putting the cart before the horse', as 'any uncivilized Indian would surely fall down and worship at his first sight of an ape'.[7] It is remarkable that it

[1] Atkinson, ii. 281 f. [2] M. Sherring, 67, 177, 217.
[3] Oppert, 97 f.; Barth, 253; *J. R. A. S.* 413.
[4] Thurston, *T. C.* i. 123. [5] *B. G.* xxi. 47, xv, part ii, 264 note.
[6] Macdonell, *V. M.* 64; Barth, 265; *E. R. E.* i. 491.
[7] Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, i. 18.

would not be easy to supply a parallel to this cult of apes beyond the limits of India. Some non-Aryan tribes venerate the monkey; he is the tribal deity of the wild Suiri in Bengal, the Bhuiyas of Keunjhar identify him with Borām, their Sun godling.[1] In the Gāro creation legend the hulock or gibbon ape (*Hylobates hoolock*) was first formed to keep the Earth Mother from falling asleep and neglecting her duties, Hanumān and the brown monkey being later creations, and the Lushais are forbidden to kill the animal because at the first great eclipse a man and his wife were turned into gibbons.[2]

As a village guardian Hanumān is the great scarer of spirits, and his images combine the animal with the anthropomorphic form, and in the epic he acts and speaks like a human being. His image is found guarding the entrances of towns and villages, as well as the shrines of the gods, and all the forts erected in the Deccan by Sivāji may be known by his image placed inside the main gate.[3] He is also the impersonation of virile strength, one of the many consorts of the Earth Mother. Women smear his image with oil on Saturday, his day, and those who are barren go to his shrine at dawn, strip themselves naked and embrace him.[4] In the Deccan when a patient is possessed by a spirit he is seated in front of Hanumān's image, and his brow is marked with ashes taken from the pot of incense which burns before him.[5] He is believed to be closely connected with human beings, and in the Central Provinces and elsewhere his position seems to rest on the belief that monkeys were the aboriginal lords and owners of the soil before man came on the scene.[6] The Jethwa Rājputs trace their descent from him, 'and confirm it by alleging the elongation of the spine of their princes, who bear the epithet of "long-tailed" Rānas of Saurashtra', and the wild Bhuiyas call themselves Pavanbans, 'children of the wind', an allusion to his name Māruti, that is to say, descended from the Maruts, Vedic storm-gods—beliefs which are possibly based on totemism.[7] Monkeys are everywhere respected and their lives are protected by an effective sanction.

Two heroes of the Mahābhārata occupy a large place in

[1] Buchanan, i. 467; Dalton, 147. [2] Playfair, 83; Shakespear, 103.
[3] *B. G.* x. 335. [4] Campbell, *Notes*, 260; Hartland, *P. P.* i. 124.
[5] *B. G.* xxii. 141. [6] Russell, *T. C.* i. 44.
[7] Tod, i. 137; *B. G.* ix, part i, 127; Dalton, 140.

popular worship—Bhīmsen and Bhīshma. The former is the burly hero of the epic, renowned for his gigantic strength, irascible temper, and great courage, jovial and jocular when in good humour, but brutal when his passions were aroused. It is strange that he has become one of the chief godlings of the Gonds, represented by a piece of iron fixed in a stone or on a tree, or he is guardian of the kitchen, and the mark of his club is depicted on the wall.[1] Some branch of the tribe call him Bhiwāsu, and represent him by a rude stone smeared with vermilion, or by two pieces of wood standing three or four feet out of the ground, which are supposed to have a phallic significance. He is served by a hedge-priest, known as Bhūmak, 'he of the soil', and on Tuesdays and Saturdays he-goats, chickens, and coco-nuts are offered to him. At the beginning of the rainy season the Gonds subscribe funds for a special offering, the Bhūmak seizes a cow belonging to the headman and sacrifices it in the presence of the people. Others smear his stone with vermilion and offer incense with animal sacrifices and a wine oblation. Then the Bhūmak becomes possessed, falls into a trance, shakes his head and leaps frantically, when he announces whether the godling has or has not accepted the sacrifice.[2] Brahmans keep a fast on his day, the 11th of Jeth (May–June), but they say that this is done only as a joke because with his great appetite Bhīmsen could not fast on the holy eleventh days of the year, and induced Krishna to prescribe only one of them as his fast day.[3] In Benares it is said that he determined to fast on this day, but after midday he fainted through hunger and thirst, so his friends heaved him into the Ganges to bring him to his senses, and Hindus observe the day as Nirjala Ekādashi, 11th of the light half of Jeth (May–June), 'abstaining from water', bathe in the evening, and smear their bodies with powdered sandalwood.[4]

Crowds of them collect round the Durga temple at Benares, where they are fed by visitors, and they are ruled by a veteran who is much feared by his brethren.[5] Many years ago two European officers were mobbed at Brindaban and driven into

[1] Grant, 323; Russell, *T. C.* 97 ff., 126 f.
[2] Hislop, 16, 23 f.
[3] Stevenson, *Rites*, 299.
[4] M. Sherring, 217.
[5] M. Sherring, 158; Greaves, 89.

the Jumna, where one of them was drowned, because they killed a monkey.[1] As a fertility charm probably, a Raja at Krishnagar in Bengal is said to have performed the marriage of a pair of monkeys, the rite being supervised by a host of Brahman Pandits.[2] In the Konkan it is believed that a gun with which a monkey has been killed will never shoot straight again, but the wild Kāthkaris who make catechu in the jungle disguise themselves in women's dress, shoot them with bows and arrows, and eat them.[3] A strange tale comes from Gorakhpur in the United Provinces that the village potters used to catch a monkey every year and crucify it at the boundary, the object being to overawe these animals who interfered with their work, but it may be an unconscious survival of human sacrifice.[4]

Stone pillars are often known as the Lāth or cudgels of Bhīmsen, and some of them, like that at Kakaon in the Gorakhpur District, are really the pillars on which Asoka inscribed his edicts.[5] In Bengal Gorakhnāth the saint is said to have revered him when he was benumbed with cold on his journey to the Himalaya, and made him lord of the hills from the source of the Ganges to Bhutan, in which area he is held in high repute, and he is said to have substituted the sacrifice of buffaloes for that of human beings.[6]

Bhīshma, the second hero of the Great War, owes his repute to his tragical end. His body was so covered by the arrows shot at him by Arjuna that when he fell from his chariot they held him up, and he lay, as it were, on a couch studded with darts. Following this model ascetics at holy places may be seen lying on beds studded with nails, the points of which are often not so sharp as the pious people who attend them suppose. The power of enduring the penance is partly a matter of habit, but in some cases the suffering of the penitent is relieved by a dose of Gānja, the narcotic intoxicant made from the female flowers of hemp (*Cannabis sativa*).[7] With this form of penance may be compared the practice of the Uriya medium who becomes possessed and sits on a pile of sharp thorns, when if he is truly

[1] Heber, ii. 6: cf. von Hügel, 58 f.
[2] Bholananth Chandra, i. 19.
[3] *B. G.* x. 43.
[4] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 146.
[5] *J. R. A. S.* 1917, p. 373.
[6] Buchanan, iii. 38 f.
[7] For photographs of such penitents see Greaves, 54; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 98.

inspired the thorns break under his weight and are powerless to pierce his skin, or of the votaries at Settikulam in Trichinopoly, particularly those who have been relieved from disease at the shrine, who fling themselves on piles of thorns before the goddess.[1]

Bhīshma is also revered on account of a typical act of Hindu devotion. When his father Sāntanu wished to marry a lovely wife her relations objected that Bhīshma was heir to the throne, and that if she bore a son he could not succeed. So Bhīshma vowed that he would never marry nor become the father of children.[2] In the month of Kārttik (November–December) women observe a five days' festival in his honour. They send lights to a Brahman's house, whose wife during the festival must lie on a place in the floor smeared with cow-dung, close to the lamps, which it is her duty to keep alight. The lamps are filled with sesamum oil, and red wicks wound round sesamum twigs are placed in the lamp saucers. Each evening the women prostrate themselves before the lamps or walk round them. They bathe on each day of the festival, eat only one meal a day, consisting of roots and cereals, and drink only milk. The rich contribute for the Brahman a silver lamp-saucer, with a golden wick, clothes, and money. At the early morning bathe of the last day five lighted lamps made of dough are placed, one at the entrance of the town or village, and the others at the cross-roads, under a sacred Pīpal tree, at a temple of Siva, and on the banks of a pond. After the lamps have gone out the black from the wicks is rubbed on the eyes and fingers of the worshippers, and their toe-nails are anointed with the remainder of the oil. The objects used indicate that the rite is intended to induce Bhīshma to keep away evil spirits.

A legend is told to explain the ceremony. Once upon a time a childless Raja threatened to kill all his Rānis unless one of them gave birth to a child. One of the Rānis who had a cat announced that she had been delivered of a girl, who was to be shut up for twelve years.[3] This was done, but when the time for the girl's wedding came the Rāni could not produce her,

[1] S. W. Rice, 75 f.; Hemingway, i. 289.
[2] Compare the renunciation of his rights by Chonda of Mewār, Tod, i. 323 f.
[3] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Balder the Beautiful', i. 12 ff.

until Bhīshma, who was pleased with the cat for taking care of the lamps at his feast, turned her into a beautiful girl, but her tail remained as it was before. Every one admired her and kept her secret, but when the bride started with her husband her tail dropped off. Hence Hindu ladies use the lamp-black and oil of Bhīshma's feast-day as valuable aids to beauty.[1] A similar tale of 'The Cat who became a Queen' appears in Kashmīr, and cases of transformation of this kind are common incidents in the folk-tales.[2]

Two remarkable instances of hero-worship are recorded in Rajputana. When Mānik Rāī defended Ajmer against the Musalmān invader his infant son, Lōt, was slain. The Chauhān sept of Rājputs to which he belonged still worship him as a household godling under the title of Putra, or 'son of the family', and as when he was killed he was wearing a silver chain anklet, some of his race wear this ornament. In fact, in every Rājput family there is a Putra who met an untimely death and has become deified.[3] The warlike Rājputs are naturally hero-worshippers, and the Chhatri or canopy in carved stone which they raise as a memorial of the eminent dead naturally forms a focus for this form of worship.[4] But the most famous of these Rājput monuments is that at Mandor in the Mārwār State, where a building is erected before a rock on which are carved 'statues of the knight-errants of the desert, armed cap-à-pie, bestriding steeds whose names are as deathless as their riders, all in the costumes of the times in which they lived. They are cut out of the rock, but entirely detached from it, and larger than life.'[5]

In recent times political agitation among the Marāthas has led to the deification of Sivāji, the founder of their state, and tales have been invented that his passing was marked by the simultaneous appearance of a comet and a lunar rainbow, as well as by an earthquake.[6]

Another remarkable development of hero-worship is the

[1] *P. N. Q.* iii. 181 f.; H. H. Wilson, ii. 201 ff.; A. B. Gupte, 11.
[2] Knowles, 10 ff.; Steel–Temple, 419 ff.
[3] Tod, i. 288, 326, ii. 952.
[4] Tod, ii. 888, 1034, iii. 1770; Growse, *Mathura*, 306, with a photograph.
[5] Tod, ii. 842 ff.; K. D. Erskine, iii. A. 196 ff.
[6] Grant Duff, i. 228 note.

deification by criminal or nomadic tribes of notorious robbers. Doms in Bihar worship Gandah, said to have been hanged for theft many years ago, and Syām Singh, another worthy of the same class; Dusādhs worship famous criminals of their caste under the names of Goraiya, Sālhes, or Kārikh.[1] At Sāgar in the Central Provinces Madhukar Sāh, a noted outlaw, has a shrine on the spot where, after execution, he was cremated, and people who make vows there are said to be cured of fever.[2] Vagrant Banjāras in the United Provinces worship Māna, apparently a deified thief, and offer animal sacrifices which are said to be the commutation of a more brutal rite in which a child used to be stupefied with toddy or palm-juice and sacrificed under a tree with orgiastic rites, and they reverence Mitthu Bhūkiya, who was once a notorious freebooter.[3]

The importance of the part played by hero-cults in the evolution of religion has recently attracted much attention. 'If this treatise', says L. Farnell, 'is censured as a revival of Euhemerism, it will only be censured on this ground by those who have not followed recent researches in anthropology and the comparative study of saga.'[4] Writing of the religion of Berar, Sir A. Lyall remarks:

'Perhaps the gods who have suffered less from the wear and tear during centuries of religious caprice, and who have longest held their ancient forms and places in the front rank of popular imagination, are the gods of heroic legend.' 'In this stage of belief the people construct for themselves Jacob's ladder between earth and heaven: the men are seen ascending until they become gods; they then descend again as embodiments of the divinities; insomuch that it may be doubted whether any god, except the Vedic divinities and other obvious Nature gods, come down the ladder who had not originally gone up as a man, and an authentic man.' 'The Nature god sometimes condenses into a man, and is propitiated upon earth, a hero or saint often refines and evaporates into a deity up in the skies.'[5]

Sir James Frazer suggests terms of peace between

'two rival schools of mythologists who have been waging fierce

[1] Gait, *C. R.* i. 196; Grierson, 407; Buchanan, i. 192.
[2] Russell, *Saugor Gaz.* i. 25.
[3] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 155, iii. 143; *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 173 f.; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 176 f.
[4] *Greek Hero Cults*, Pref., p. vi.
[5] *Asiatic Studies*, i. 36 f., 48 f., 52.

war on each other for ages. On the one hand, it has been argued that mythical beings are nothing but personifications of natural objects and natural processes; on the other hand, it has been maintained that they are nothing but notable men and women who in their lifetime, for one reason or another, made a great impression on their fellows, but whose doings have been distorted and exaggerated by a false and credulous tradition. These two views, it is now easy to see, are not mutually exclusive as their supporters have imagined. The personages about whom all the marvels of mythology have been told may have been the real beings, as the Euhemerists allege: and yet they may have been the personifications of natural objects or processes, as the adversaries of Euhemerism assert. The doctrine of incarnation supplies the missing link that was needed to unite the two seemingly inconsistent theories.' [1]

Elsewhere he writes: 'if we could strictly interrogate the phantoms which the human mind has conjured up out of the depths of its bottomless ignorance and enshrined as deities in the dim light of temples, we should find that the majority of them have been nothing but the ghosts of dead men.' [2]

The evidence collected in this and in the previous chapter will establish the importance of ancestor worship and the cults of heroes in popular religion in Northern India. But there are many forms of belief usually classed as animistic—cults of mountains, rivers, trees, animals, and the like—which it is not easy to bring within the circle of ancestral or hero cults, unless we are driven to the almost impossible conclusion that these things are supposed to be the receptacles of the bones or ashes of the dead. But the cults of deified men are widespread. It seems possible, for example, that the Khāsi deities of to-day are merely the spirits of glorified deceased ancestors trans figured.[3] Among Bhīls 'the village gods are usually of high caste, either Brahman, Rājput, or Nāik, showing their derivation from real persons. The Brahman godling is worshipped with Sindūr [vermilion], coco-nut, milk, flour, gur [coarse sugar], and ghi [butter]; the Rājput with fowls, sheep, and liquor; the Nāik with cattle.' [4] In Baroda one of the dead Gaikwārs is

[1] *G. B.* 'The Scapegoat', 385.
[2] *Ibid.* 'Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', Pref. ix: cf. Ridgeway, *Origin of Tragedy*, 127 ff.
[3] Gurdon, 110.
[4] Luard, *Eth. Sur.*, art. Bhīl, p. 29.

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[3] Gurdon, 110.
[4] Luard, *Eth. Sur.*, art. Bhil, p. 29.

represented by a picture, another by an image dressed up, a third by a stone face, or by a bid or phial of water in the case of princesses, and people offer flowers and sometimes do reverence and pray to them.[1] A well-informed writer states that the Halba farmers in the Central Provinces 'worship a pantheon of glorified distillers', but this is doubtful.[2] Living men-gods are also known. Sivāji patronized a youth who claimed to be an incarnation of Hanumān, the ape godling, and the case of the living god at Chinchvad in the Poona District, who conferred his divinity on a descendant alive at the present day, is classical.[3]

This process of deification is aided by the tendency to develop the tomb raised over a man of eminence into a temple. When Bahuchra, a Chāran girl, committed suicide on an attack on her party by Koli bandits, a cairn was erected over her grave, and this has now developed into the famous temple dedicated to the Mother Bechrāji in the Baroda State.[4] Among Thārus in the sub-Himalayan Tarāi

'a man noted above his fellows for wisdom in counsel, bravery in the chase, or knowledge of the magical and medicinal art is buried under the floor of the house in which he was living before his spirit departed. The house thenceforth becomes a temple, and ceases to be used as a dwelling-place for man. The soul of the dead becomes its occupant, and it lives there to bless those whom it has left behind. At periods of three or six months after his death the friends and neighbours of the deceased assemble round his grave or temple and make an effigy in clay, parts of which are painted in various colours intended to reproduce the appearance of resuscitated life. The worshippers fall down weeping and wailing before the image, and place offerings of cooked flesh and wine at its feet. Presently, at a given signal, as soon as the soul of the dead is believed to have been propitiated by the scent of roast meat and the fumes of wine, they commence to dance and sing with every demonstration of joy; and the proceedings of the day are closed with consuming the solid part of the offerings.' [5]

In the same way the Linga of Siva resembles the tombstones raised in honour of Dravidian warriors, or the Stūpa or Buddhist mound, and dolmens have actually been used as Saiva temples.[6]

[1] *B. G.* vii. 17. [2] Grant, Introd. cxxi.
[3] Grant Duff, i. 144; Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 402 ff.; *Folk-lore*, xxxi. 72 ff. [4] Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 426; *B. G.* vii. 609 ff.
[5] J. C. Nesfield, quoted by Risley, *T. C.* ii. 318 f. [6] *E. R. E.* xi. 92.

VII

THE SPIRITS OF THE MALEVOLENT DEAD, AND DEMONS

The fate of the spirit in the other world is seldom clearly formulated by the peasant. If he has come under Brahman influence he believes in a vague way in metempsychosis or reincarnation, and his aim is to avoid, if possible, these intermediate stages, and, by the accumulation of Karma or good works, to become finally absorbed into the world spirit. But this metaphysical view has little influence in the lower cultures. The peasant draws a clear line of distinction between the friendly dead of his house who, if duly tended by their surviving relatives, act as their protectors, and the foreign dead, strangers to him and therefore naturally hostile. The souls of the dead may appear in various places: they may frequent their original home, or abide at the burial or cremation ground, in trees or other physical objects until their relatives are assured that they have joined the company of the Pitri or blessed dead in the dark side of the moon or in some other vaguely defined abode of happiness. But the attainment of their final rest occupies some time during which they need help and tendance, generally for a year or so, while they are on their way to judgement in the court of Yama, god of death. As an example of this vague conception of the fate of the departed, Nāgas doubt whether the soul remains in the corpse, or near the grave, or goes to a far country, or to a hill in the south, or in the direction of the setting sun: others, again, imagine that the spirit goes to a heaven, where it lives in happiness under conditions similar to those of its life on earth.[1]

Death is often assigned not to natural causes, a view which is accepted by modern science:

'violent death in one form or another—traumatic or infective—is so much the rule that natural death in the animal kingdom

[1] *J. R. A. I.* xxxii. 463.

has been questioned, just as some botanists have denied the natural death of trees and considered that that event is always caused by injury or disease.'[1]

In popular belief it is the result of the wrath of some godling or offended spirit, whose name can be ascertained by a process of divination. If a Korku falls ill and desires to ascertain what godling or spirit has caused the disease, a handful of corn is waved over the patient and taken to the Bhumka exorcist, who piles it in a heap on the floor, sits over it, swings a lighted lamp suspended by four strings from his fingers, and then repeats slowly the names of the village godlings and deceased relatives of the patient. The name at which his lamp stops moving is that of the offended one.[2]

Thus the feeling of the living towards the dead is based partly on affection, partly on fear. As a rule fear predominates, and throughout the lower culture people dread to pass cremation or burial grounds at night. Even the Mikirs, who are said not to dread that the departed will return to plague the living, sometimes dread passing burial grounds at night.[3]

According to the orthodox theory, when a man has become subject to the penalties of Yama, owing to evil deeds done in this life or from some defect in the funereal rites, the spirit takes a downward course and passes out of his body with the excreta. But the spirit of a good man finds its exit through the tenth aperture of his body, the suture at the top of the skull, known as Brahma-randhram, 'the crevice of Brahmā'.[4] Ascetics, like the Sannyāsi or Jogi, who have become absorbed in the world soul during life, and therefore need no Srāddha or funereal rites, are believed to possess the power of concentrating the soul at the crown of their heads, and they can die at will, the soul passing straight to felicity through the Brahmā-randhram. To assist the exit of the soul, the successor in office of the holy man strikes a coco-nut or conch-shell on his skull, and in the opening thus made places the Sālagrāma or sacred ammonite, an act known as Kapāla-Kriya, 'the skull rite'.[5]

The soul thus disengaged from the body is known as Pret,

[1] *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 December 1922, reviewing Sir H. Rolleston, *Some Medical Aspects of Old Age*.

[2] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 560.

[3] Stack, 29.

[4] *E. R. E.* vii. 659.

[5] Monier-Williams, 291.

Preta, 'departed'. Some believe that the moment it issues from the body it is seized by the two dreaded messengers of Yama, who conduct a preliminary inquest to make sure that the right soul has been arrested. But mistakes do sometimes occur, as in the case in Bengal of two men of the same name, one of whom had completed his allotted time, while the other had many years to live. Chitragupta, the recorder of Yama, sent his messengers to arrest the former, but they seized the other by mistake. Fortunately the error was discovered before the relatives had time to burn the body, and when the soul was restored to earth it was able to give a vivid account of its experiences at the court of Yama.[1] Others, however, think it expedient that the vacant body should be cremated while the soul is absent, lest it should have a chance of re-entering the corpse, and this is said to be one reason why cremation should be performed as soon as possible after death.[2]

During the interval between death and the final judgement of Yama, a period of about a year, the soul wanders about in a state of unhappy restlessness. It is a feeble creature, about the size of a man's thumb, its throat the size of a needle's eye, and it suffers from thirst which no amount of water can fully assuage, for the watchmen of Varuna, god of water, stand ready to prevent it from drinking.[3] It sits twittering in mournful tones on the house-roof. On the monuments the Pret is represented with an inflated body, and a pointed snout, with a pin-prick opening too small to enable it to quench its thirst; at Sarnāth it is depicted as a skeleton emaciated by starvation.[4] The Pret, therefore, must be supplied with food and especially with drink laid outside the house or on the roof. In Bihār the Karta or chief mourner on the day after the funeral hangs on the village Pīpal or sacred fig-tree a vessel full of milk with a little hole in the bottom partially stopped with a plug, so that the contents may drop on the root of the tree.[5] For ten days after death others hang on the Pīpal tree a Ghant, or perforated jar, full of water, with an orifice closed by stalks of holy Kusa grass, because the Pret cannot touch the ground, and it drinks as the drops fall from the jar. This series of rites is often known

[1] Ward, ii. 63. [2] Stevenson, *Rites*, 156.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 348. [4] *A. S. R.* 1904–5, p. 81. [5] Grierson, 393.

as Nārāyanbali, 'Vishnu's oblation', and facilitates the release of the spirit, which is accomplished by the Sapindi-karana, Sapinda being the term applied to those relatives who unite in providing the Pinda or balls of barley meal, or the Udaka or water oblation for the dead.

The term Pret is also applied to the spirit of a deformed or crippled person, one defective in some limb or organ, or of a child who has died prematurely owing to the non-performance of the rites during the formation of the embryo—the Garbhadhāna, or impregnation rite, and the Pumsavana or rite which ensures the production of male offspring. In many places these rites are now discontinued, the substitutes being fasts which the newly married pair undergo, especially the wife to gain long life for her husband, or the boon of a son.[1] Or the service is confined to the Godbharnā or 'lap-filling', in which the woman's lap is filled by a woman who has never lost a child with rice, coconuts, and other things of this kind.[2] The mutilated dead are apt to turn into Bhūts or evil spirits. In the lower Himalaya at the place where the dead are cremated Bhūts lurk, and they are occasionally seen to come under the leadership of Bholanāth,[3] some in litters, others on foot, to the Almora bazar, where they visit merchants' shops, but any one who witnesses the procession is sure to die. They are said to lack some members: one has no head, another no feet, and so on, but all are able to dance and talk.[4] This explains the dread of punishment by decapitation. In the case of ruling princes mutilation is sometimes regarded as a disqualification for office. Jain priests in Mysore refused to eat with Raja Bittideva because he had lost one of his fingers, and this is one of the reasons for the blinding of claimants to a throne, of which many instances appear in Indian history.[5]

Some of the lowest castes seem to believe that children have no souls, but the orthodox opinion is that the soul enters the foetus in the fifth month of pregnancy, and that the cry of the newborn infant is the wail of the spirit when it finds itself caught in the meshes of Maya or illusion. Initiation marks the admission

[1] Stevenson, *Rites*, 108.
[2] Cf. Ja'far Sharif, 20; *B. G.* ix, part i, 31 f.
[3] p. 160 above.
[4] *J. A. S. B.* 1848, p. 609.
[5] L. Rice, *Mysore*, i. 335; Fryer, iii. 376.

of the child to caste privileges and obligations, and children dying before this rite are usually buried, not cremated, because the spirit in this case does not pass into the ether, and may be reincarnated in some woman of the family.[1] Lhota Nāgas bury such children in the front room of the house, the explanation given being that the parents do not like to think of its lying out in the rain, but this is perhaps a secondary theory.[2] Custom varies regarding the caste obligations on young children. In Bengal high-caste children before initiation may eat with those of any clean caste, and Maithil Brahmans on the eve of the Upanayana, or 'thread-girding' rite, allow children to eat food cooked by Dhānuk or Kahār domestic servants; Munda boys may eat food cooked by any caste, except the very lowest, until they are married, and girls until the age of six or seven, when they let their hair grow long. But these rules do not admit of any precise definition.[3]

Under provocation the Pret is apt to be malignant, but if its wants are provided, it ranks with the benign ancestral spirits and it is not necessarily dangerous to the living. At the Pret-sila or 'Pret's rock' at Gaya pilgrims make an offering in the hope that Yama may not beat or bruise the souls of the dead, and a class of Brahmans in Bihār, said to be orginally hedge-priests of the Dhānuk caste, are called Pretiya because they are believed to worship the soul of some hero or saint.[4]

The spirits of the dead reveal themselves in dreams, which are of various kinds: the rich-sensed, the true-sensed, and the senseless. A dream which quickly reveals its meaning is rich-sensed; that in which a propitious deity gives a command is true-sensed; one brought about by excessive mediation is senseless; a dream seen at the end of the night is quickly fulfilled.[5] The forest and menial tribes pay great regard to dreams. Lhota Nāgas recognize many varieties and pay much regard to their interpretation; Korwas say that an evil spirit

[1] Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 299.
[2] Mills, 260; Frazer, *G. B.* 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris', i. 93 f.
[3] O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 446 f.; G. H. Desai, *C. R.* i. 180; Gait, *C. R. Bengal*, i. 367; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 517.
[4] *E. R. E.* vi. 183; Buchanan, i. 65, 166.
[5] Somadeva, i. 141: cf. Homer, *Odyssey*, iv. 841: for Vedic dreams see *E. R. E.* v. 38 ff.

sent by a warlock worries them in dreams; Kharwārs think that the soul leaves the body in a dream and wanders in the jungle in search of roots and fruits, and that when it returns the dreamer wakes, but that if the spirit is thirsty at night and goes out to drink, should any one cover the water-pot it cannot return, a belief also current in the Panjab.[1] Angāmi Nāgas have what they call 'the place of the dream-stone'. Men go and sleep there after they have obtained a favourable omen by killing chickens, and if the result is good they send word to their relatives who bring them home, a custom like that of the Greek incubation.[2] Falling in love in a dream is a stock incident in the folk-tales.[3] In the Buddhist royal courts special officials were appointed to interpret dreams,[4] and nowadays little manuals sold in the bazars describe the varieties of dreams and their meaning. As the spirit is supposed to leave the body in a dream, it is very dangerous to wake a sleeper suddenly, lest the absent soul may not be able to return, and for the same reason it is forbidden to play tricks which may endanger a sleeper, such as painting the face or making marks of a beard and moustache on the face of a sleeping woman. A man's shadow, like his soul, is part of his personality, and it may be separated from him, or an enemy may injure him by maltreating his shadow. The soul is also in its weakest state when the shadow is least, about noontide. Lhota Nāgas suppose that men have two souls, one appearing in the shadow, disappearing at noonday with the decreasing shadow, and leaving the body before death in a case of serious illness; the other leaves at the moment of death and goes straight to deathland.[5] Orāons suppose that the shadow of a man cast on a wall is double, one very thick in front, the other light behind; and in the same way a man has two spirits, the heavy one going to the tribal heaven, while the other remains with his relatives on earth.[6] Buddha is said to have left his shadow in various places, as at Nagarahara in the Jalalabad valley, and in a case at Pabhosa

[1] Mills, 170 ff.; *N. I. N. Q.* i. 70, 194; *P. N. Q.* iii. 166.
[2] Hutton, *Angami*, 254; Halliday, 128 ff.; Frazer, *Pausanias*, ii. 476 f., iii. 243.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 31; Somadeva, i. 276.
[4] *Jātaka*, i. 187, v. 239.
[5] Mills, 118.
[6] Dehon, 135.

in the Allahabad District, United Provinces.[1] It is said that when Sankarāchārya, the great religious reformer and teacher of the Vedānta philosophy, went to Nepal he had a controversy with the Grand Lama, who ended the discussion by transfixing Sankara's shadow on the ground with a knife, on which Sankara fell and was immediately killed.[2] Manu, the lawgiver, warns the twice-born man not to step intentionally on the shadow of an idol, of a Guru, of a king, of a Brahman who has completed his term of studentship, of a teacher, of a reddish-brown animal, or of one who has been initiated.[3] Bhunjias in the Central Provinces think it disrespectful to tread on the shadow of an elderly person.[4] The shadow of an impure person falling on one causes as much pollution as the touch of its owner. Mahār outcasts in Bombay, on passing the village well in the morning, may be seen crouching lest their shadows may fall on the women drawing water.[5] Sunni Musalmāns in Bombay cover a looking-glass in the room of a dying person with a cloth which they do not remove till the corpse has been carried out to burial. They likewise cover the mirrors in their room before retiring to rest at night, and Bombay Brahmans think it very unlucky for their girls to gaze into the barber's mirror, the women present strictly forbidding them to do so.[6] In the two last cases the theory appears to be that the soul, particularly when absent in a dream, is apt to be absorbed into the mirror, and that as girls are liable to hysteria, interpreted to be a spirit attack, looking into the mirror may weaken their souls. The custom of covering the mirror when a man is dying is less easily explained. Dr. Hartland suggests that it is done to avoid puzzling or misleading the ghost in its efforts to leave the house, but Sir James Frazer believes that the mirror is covered or turned back to front lest the soul projected out of the body in the shape of the reflection in the mirror may be carried off by the ghost of the departed; possibly both these beliefs may have contributed to establish the practice.[7]

The same train of ideas suggests the objection to being painted or photographed, an act supposed to weaken the soul. Many

[1] Beal, i. Introd. cvii, 93, 137; Führer, 144.
[2] Oldfield, ii. 129.
[3] *Laws*, iv. 130.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 327.
[5] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 441.
[6] *P. N. Q.* ii. 169.
[7] *E. R. E.* iv. 415; *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 94 f.

years ago a banker at Mirzapur built a rest-house for the use of the European community, but he unguardedly allowed his picture to be painted and hung in one of the rooms, with the result that he was attacked by consumption and died soon after. Many Angāmi Nāgas believe that if their photographs are carried down to the plains they will gradually pine away and die, and in some villages 'it is practically impossible to photograph young girls, as they regard the camera as some diabolical contrivance for revealing their pudenda'.[1] The prejudice of some people to allow their skulls to be measured by an anthropologist is based on the belief that something is extracted from them by the operation.

The consideration of these peasant beliefs regarding the soul leads to the conception of the Bhūt, Sanskrit *bhūta*, root *bhū*, 'to become', which in the Veda denotes a 'created being', and in later times 'an uncanny being, spirit, ghost, or goblin'. This is the creature that besets the imagination of the peasant. In its most malignant form the Bhūt is the ghost of a man who has perished by a violent death, by epidemic as opposed to endemic disease, by accident, suicide, or capital punishment, and its malignity is enhanced if it has been denied due funereal rites. Hence arises the pressing demand of the death ritual, of the Srāddha, and other rites of appeasement and tendance of the dead.

There are many varieties of Bhūts. First comes the spirit of the childless man, who leaves this world discontented because he has been denied the pleasure of possessing children, and, in particular, of a son and heir capable of performing the obsequial rites. Manu lays down: 'because a son delivers his father from the Hell called Put, he was therefore called Put-tra, a deliverer from Put, by the Self-existent himself.'[2] In the Panjab these childless spirits are called Gayāl, 'those that are gone', used in an euphemistic sense, and they are regarded as spiteful, specially towards the young sons of other more fortunate people. Every Panjab village in the plains has a small platform with rows of little hemispherical depressions into

[1] Hutton, *Angami*, 251: cf. *G. B. loc. cit.* 96 ff.

[2] *Laws*, ix. 138; Monier-Williams (*Sanskrit Dict.* s.v.) connects *putrā*, 'a son', with *Pitri*, 'the sainted dead', or with *pū*, 'to purify'.

which milk and Ganges water are poured; beside this lamps are lit and Brahmans are fed to conciliate the Gayāl. The careful mother of a son will always dedicate a rupee to him and hang it round his neck till he grows up as a protection against these spirits.[1] Sir D. Ibbetson suggested that the depressions in the Gayāl's platform explained the origin of the cup-markings on dolmens in many parts of the world, but the meaning of these markings is still very obscure, and they may have been used for oblations to earth or other spirits.[2] Another name for the childless ghost is Aūt, 'deceased', or Autar, which apparently means 'childless'. When a man dies childless his relations must appease his spirit by wearing an amulet with a human figure engraved on it, and he must be propitiated by a sacrifice of a goat, and by a member of the family donning for a time the clothes of the deceased, apparently a mode of seeking communion with him, and by wearing the kernel of a soap-nut round his neck.[3] Or, again, he is euphemistically called Pita, 'father', and a little shrine like a fireplace is erected near a tank at which offerings are made. Sometimes a Pita 'comes on a man's head', who becomes inspired and announces the will of the spirit by shaking his head; in Chamba, unless he is appeased, he worries his relatives, and as a protective an amulet in the shape of a copper case holding a charm written by a Brahman is worn.[4] Gūjars and Kīrs in the United Provinces, when a son of the family dies unmarried, make an image of him known as Mujia in metal and worship it on Mondays and Fridays in Māgh (January–February), when they give a dinner to the castemen.[5] In the lower Himalaya the Tola is a bachelor ghost with whom other ghosts refuse to associate, so he is seen only in wild and solitary places; others say that he belongs to the group of children's ghosts, those who have died before the age of tonsure and initiation, and therefore harmless and not much dreaded. After a child has undergone these rites its status is said to be matured, and it is now fitted to join the Pitri or sainted dead, or to be reincarnated, but the status of the Tola

[1] Ibbetson, 116.
[2] *E. R. E.* iv. 363 ff.; Walsh, 271 ff.
[3] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 199 f.
[4] *Ibid.* i. 212.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 173, 483. Mujia seems to take its name from the Mūnj grass (*Saccharum munja*) out of which the cord of the twice-born is made.

is only temporary, and after a time he enters another form of existence.[1] They say in Gujarāt that 'there is no fear of being haunted by so tiny a child, for it can have had no desires, and no Srāddha is therefore performed for it. The baby died through its own wickedness, and so there is no hope for it. It must have been wicked indeed to die so early, and it will have to go through all the eighty-four lākhs of rebirths'.[2]

One of the usual modes of preventing the ghosts of childless ancestors and those who have met with a violent death from giving trouble is to present a cow to a Brahman, but, particularly in southern India, there is the remarkable custom whereby the corpse of a bachelor is formally wedded to a living girl. There seems to be no record of this rite in the north, and the revolting proceeding described by some writers seems to be based on a misunderstanding.[3]

The next group of malignant ghosts is that of the unburied dead. Nāyars in Malabar believe that the careful collection and disposal of the ashes of the dead man give peace to his spirit, and, what is more important, the spirit thus pacified will not thereafter injure his surviving relations by causing miscarriage to women or by possessing the men.[4] It is desirable, if possible, that the ashes or bones of those dying at a distance should be brought to the family or tribal burying-place, so that the soul of the deceased may rest with those of his relatives, and if this is not practicable a mock cremation or burial is performed. If a Chamār dies while absent from home the body is buried or cremated immediately, and when his relatives receive news of his death they make an image of him and perform the funereal rites over it.[5] If a Gāro dies at a distance from his village and the cremation cannot be done at home, they buy a number of cowry shells and put them in a pot to represent him.[6] This simple rite has become under Brahman guidance an elaborate ceremonial. In the Deccan three hundred and sixty leaves of the Palāsa tree (*Butea frondosa*) are laid on the skin of a black

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 27; *Asiatic Res.* xvi. 137 f.; Atkinson, ii. 832 f.
[2] Stevenson, *Rites*, 202.
[3] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 14; Dubois, 16 f.; Anantha Krishna Iyer, *T. C.* ii. 198; Thurston, *T. C.* i. 117, 250 f., iii. 334, v. 38, 197, vi. 22, 111, vii. 152 f.: cf. *E. R. E.* ii. 22.
[4] Thurston, *T. C.* v. 357. [5] Briggs, 106. [6] Playfair, 111.

antelope to represent the absent corpse in all its parts. The leaves are tied in bunches, rolled up in sacred grass, and at the top a coco-nut representing the head is fixed, with thirty-two pomegranate seeds for the teeth, two shells for the ears, and so on. A little arsenic represents the breath, yellow pigment the bile, sea foam the phlegm, honey the blood, bristles of the wild hog the hair, and for the flesh wet barley flour, honey and butter. A sacred thread and a flower garland are added, and a lighted lamp is laid on the place where the belly should be. Then life is brought into the figure by sprinkling it with rice, and when the light goes out the whole is cremated on a pyre and the usual Srāddha is performed.[1] In Gujarāt an image of the dead man is made of the holy Darbha grass (*Poa cynosuroides*) and it is duly cremated at the river-side.[2]

The ghosts of those who die in a tragical or unusual way or with their earthly desires unrealized are specially dreaded. This accounts for the cult of youthful godlings or heroes, like that of Dūlhadeo or the Rajput Putra which has been elsewhere discussed.[3] Lhota Nāgas consider that in cases of death by any form of accident strict purificatory rites are needed, and care is taken to burn or cut down a tree from which a man has fallen and met his death.[4] The Bhūla, ghosts who have lost their way, include among Orāons those of the murdered, the hanged, and those killed by tigers. When the Ojha or medicine-man discovers one of these by the light of his lamp, he takes a few grains of rice, rubs them with charcoal, and throws them at the flame, saying, 'Take this, Bhūla, and go away!'[5] Persons dying from accident, in child-birth, or in war must not be buried within a Lushai village, and in some cases if the death occurred outside the body must not enter the village, or if it is brought inside it is placed in the forge, this being a protection against dangerous spirits.[6] The forest tribes take special precautions in the case of deaths by tigers. Halbas in the Central Provinces, when a man has been killed by a tiger, search for his remains, and if any are found cremate them on the spot. Then the Baiga medicine-man hangs a copper ring on a long thread over a vessel of water,

[1] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 564 f.: cf. *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 201.
[2] Stevenson, *Rites*, 151.
[3] p. 179 above.
[4] Mills, 160: cf. Frazer, *Psyche's Task*, 130 f.
[5] Dalton, 140 f.
[6] Shakespear, 86, 173, 223.

burns sugar and butter in a fire, and mutters incantations while the relations sing songs calling on the dead man's spirit to return. As the thread swings the ring falls into the pot, a sign that the spirit has entered the vessel, which is immediately buried, or kept in some safe place, for it is believed that unless the spirit is secured it will accompany the tiger and lure solitary travellers to their death.[1] The Lhota Nāga, when a man has died in this way, will not pass the corpse without waving a piece of green stuff to and fro to ward off evil fate.[2] When a Gond has been killed by a tiger none but the nearest relations will touch the corpse, and then only because they are obliged to do so. The body is burned and a bamboo image of a tiger is made and thrown outside the village. None of the ornaments are removed from the corpse, and sometimes any other ornaments possessed by the deceased are added to them, as it is thought that otherwise the tiger into which his spirit passes will come back to look for him and kill some other person in the house. In some places any one who touches the body of a man killed or even wounded by a tiger or leopard is put temporarily out of caste, and he and his family have to undergo an elaborate rite of purification done by the Baiga. Yet Gonds will eat the flesh of tigers or leopards, or that of animals partially devoured by them.[3] These taboos of the corpse are clearly based on fear of the ghost of the victim.

The most notorious and dreaded of this class of ghosts is the Churel, as she is called in Northern India, in Western India the Jākhın, Jakhāi, Jokhāi, Mukāi, Nagulāi, or Ālvantin. She is the ghost of a woman who has died while pregnant, on the day of the birth of the child, or during the prescribed period of impurity. The superstition is based on the general taboo of women and dread of their blood during menstruation and child-birth, to which is added fear of the ghost.[4] The dread of the Churel extends through all classes and prevails in all parts of the country In Kulu when a woman dies in pregnancy her husband is supposed to have committed some sin, he is held to be unclean, he must become a Faqīr and go on a pilgrimage, the corpse of

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 195 f. : cf. O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 476 f.
[2] Mills, 141 note.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 91.
[4] Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 145 ff.

the woman is buried after the child has been removed from her body by one of the Dāgi caste.[1] The wild Bhuiyas of Keonjhar, if a woman dies before her delivery, extract the embryo from her corpse and bury the two bodies on opposite sides of a hill stream, the theory being that as no spirit can cross water,[2] she cannot become a witch unless she joins her child, a danger which is avoided by this precaution.[3] Some Nāga septs bury a woman who has died in child-birth inside the house, but others bury all movable articles belonging to the family, abandon the house altogether, or carry out the corpse by the small door at the side of the house, or even through an opening made in the wall for this purpose and then closed, and bury it close to the house within the limit of the shadow cast by the sun from the roof at noon.[4] The use of a special opening for the corpse is intended to prevent it from finding its way back, but its burial close to the house points to the theory that it is well to keep it under control and prevent it from becoming a dangerous wandering spirit. Even Brahmans in Gujarāt dread the ghost of such a woman, believing that she becomes a Dākini, one of the female fiends who attend the bloodthirsty goddess Kāli and feed on human flesh.[5]

In appearance the Churel is fair in front but black behind, or she has no covering of skin down her back, and her horrible raw flesh appears. But, like the Gira, a water spirit in the Konkan, and the Yach demons in the Hindu Kush, she always has her feet turned backwards, heels in front and toes behind.[6] Many tales are told of young men who were enticed into a flirtation with some siren Churel at night, and fortunately noticed her tell-tale feet in time to escape out of her clutches. When she succeeds in attracting a young man by night she carries him off to some kingdom of her own, and if her lover dares to eat food there she detains him till he loses his strength and beauty, and then she returns him to earth a grey-haired old man.[7]

Other precautions besides those already mentioned are used

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 204. [2] p. 65 above. [3] Gait, *C. R. Bengal*, i. 199.
[4] Hodson, *Nagas*, 147; Mills, 146. [5] Stevenson, *Rites*, 199.
[6] Campbell, *Notes*, 156; Biddulph, 94. For back-footed beings see *Folk-lore*, xvii. 131 ff.
[7] On the danger of eating food in fairyland see Hartland, *S. F. T.* 42; Somadeva, ii. 198.

to counteract the machinations of the Churel. Guravs in Bombay, if a woman dies within ten days after her delivery, drive nails into the threshold and sprinkle millet seeds behind her bier on the way to the burning ground[1]—the iron being a powerful protection against evil spirits, and when she attempts to return she must pick up and count every grain of millet, but the day breaks before she has finished her task and she must return the way she came. Chuhra scavengers in the Panjab, when they bury such a woman, drive a nail through her hands and feet to prevent her from 'walking', put red pepper in her eyes, and bury her with a chain fixed round her ankles, sowing mustard on the way so that it may blind her, and using other charms to repel her ghost.[2] The Bhandāris in Bengal remove the child from her body and bury them both in one grave.[3] In the lower Himalaya when a woman dies during her courses or in child-birth the body is anointed with the Panchagavya, or five products of the sacred cow, and it is buried or thrown into running water.[4] It is a common practice to prevent her return by physical means. Orāons break the feet of the corpse above the ankles, twist them round so as to bring the heels in front as those of a Churel should be, bury with her the bones of an ass, and say, 'If you come, may you turn into an ass!' They put the roots of a palm-tree near her and say, 'May you return only when the leaves of a palm-tree wither!'[5] It is the habit of Hindus to bind the corpse securely to the bier and to tie the big toes together in order to baffle the ghost. In the case of the Churel special nails are driven into her fingers and toes, and the feet are bound with iron rings. One special reason for the care taken in disposing of her remains is that they may be used for the purposes of Black Magic. Kilikets and other Bombay tribes burn the bodies of pregnant women in order to prevent the Gārudis or snake-charmers digging them up and using their bones as charms, and in Central India precautions are used that no part of the corpse remains unburnt lest her spirit may become the founder of some Dākini or demon witch.[6]

[1] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 30.
[2] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 206; Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 303.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* i. 94. [4] Atkinson, ii. 932. [5] Dalton, 140.
[6] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 236; Luard, *C. R.* 63.

When one of a married couple marries a second time the jealous ghost of the husband or wife resents seeing his or her partner in the arms of a living rival.[1] The custom of the levirate, in which the widow is made over to the brother of her late husband, seems to be, in some measure, based on this belief.[2] In Bombay, if a Koli widow-bride falls sick, her illness is believed to be the work of her late husband; when a Kshatri widow marries again her first husband's ghost troubles her and any illness which befalls her is attributed to it; so she consults an exorcist who gives her some charmed rice, flowers, and basil leaves, with instructions that she is to enclose them in a small copper box and wear them round her neck, or he gives her a charmed coco-nut which he tells her to worship daily, or he advises her to make a copper or silver image of her late husband and worship it.[3] If the wife of a Bhāmtya in the Central Provinces dies and he marries a second time his new wife wears a Putli or image of the first wife round her neck, offers the Hom or fire sacrifice to it by throwing some ghi on the fire before taking a meal; in cases of doubt or difficulty she often speaks to the Putli and consults it, and any chance stir of the image due to the movement of her body is interpreted as an approval or disapproval of the course suggested.[4] In the Panjab and the United Provinces this image, worn by the widower and his second wife, is known as Saukan-maura, 'the co-wife's crown'. It is a little silver amulet, generally with an image of Devi embossed on it, and any gifts presented to the second wife are first offered to it with the object of appeasing the jealousy of the first wife. Another method is employed in the Panjab. If a man weds two or three wives in succession he gets a woman to catch a bird which he adopts as his daughter; he pays its dower, marries his bird-wife, immediately divorces her, and thus passes on to her all danger from the ghost of one or other of his dead wives.[5] Barais in the Central Provinces take the second husband of a widow to the shrine of Māruti, Hanumān, the ape-god, where he offers a coco-nut and betel leaves. The coco-nut

[1] Frazer, *F. L. O. T.* i. 523 ff.; Hartland, *Ritual and Belief*, 194 ff.; Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 283 f.; Westermarck, *Hist. Human Marriage*, i. 327 f.
[2] Westermarck, *op. cit.* iii. 217.
[3] Campbell, *Notes*, 171.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 237.
[5] *P. N. Q.* i. 14; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 202.

represents the spirit of the deceased husband, and it is laid on a plank and kicked off by the new bridegroom as a token that he has taken the place of the other, and it is then finally buried to lay his ghost.[1] When a widow of the Teli or oilman caste marries a second time blood is drawn from a goat at the bridegroom's house and the bride's great toe is immersed in it, the intention being by this means to lay the ghost of her first husband.[2] When the husband of a Gond woman has been killed by a tiger and she marries again, she first goes through a mock rite of marriage with a lance, sword, axe, or dog; it is believed that the tiger into which her late husband has entered will try to kill her second mate, but owing to the rite he will carry off only the dog, or will himself be killed by one of the weapons.[3] In Bombay a widow of the Kolhāti or caste of tumblers may marry a third time, but in that case she is obliged to hold a cock by her side while the marriage ceremony is being performed, and a bachelor may marry a widow if he has first been married to a Rui tree (*Calotropis gigantea*), a rite known as Arka-vivāha, or 'sun marriage', because the sun is believed to abide in its bright flowers.[4] The marriage of a widow is considered unlucky. Naikdas in Baroda require that it should be performed at night, for it is a common belief that if a widow is remarried in the daytime the village will be burnt.[5]

To continue the catalogue of Bhūts—in Bengal the ordinary Bhūt belongs to the Kshatriya, warrior, Vaisya, trader, or Sūdra, menial classes; the Brahman Bhūt known as Brahm or Brahmdaitya is a different variety. Ordinary Bhūts are as tall as palmyra trees, generally thin and very black. They usually abide in trees, except those which the Brahm frequents. At night and especially at midnight they wander about the fields and frighten travellers. Like the Jinn, they prefer dirty places to those which are clean, so when a man attempts to get a Bhūt into his power he makes the experiment in some dirty, retired place, and offers only half-cooked food, so that the creature may not have time to gobble it up and perchance rend the adventurer. They do not enter the temples of the great gods, but lurk in the

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 195; *id.*, *Wardha Gaz.* i. 77.
[2] *Id.*, *Wardha Gaz.* i. 62.
[3] *Id.*, *T. C.* iii. 81.
[4] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 241; *B. G.* xviii, part i, 560 f.
[5] G. H. Desai, *C. R.* i. 159; O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 321.

vicinity in the hope of getting a share of the offerings, and the priest in charge must always be on the alert to scare them by ringing his bell or blowing his conch-shell trumpet. They are usually stark naked and are fond of women, whom they occasionally abduct. They eat rice and other human food, but prefer fish, and hence no Bengali, except under pressure or for a consideration, will talk of fish at night. The best chance of escaping them is when theyare quarrelling amongst themselves, and a person beset by them is advised to invoke the gods, especially Kāli, Durgā, and Siva, the last of whom is Lord of Bhūts.

Brahman Bhūts are especially dangerous owing to the horror felt at the death of such holy men by violence.[1] The Marātha Government used to starve Brahman criminals to death in order to avoid the risk of executing them.[2] A chief of the Sāvantvādi State once killed a Brahman and his ghost persecutes his descendants to this day ; he becomes so excited at the use of the seal of his murderer that his successors are obliged to employ a Brahman to seal the State papers.[3] Even the hero Rāma was so polluted by the death of Rāvana, whose ghost took the form of a Brahma-rākshasa or Brahman demon, that he was obliged to wander from one holy pool to another to get rid of him. In Bengal the Brahm appears in the form of a headless trunk, with eyes staring from his breast. He occupies trees, throws stones at travellers, and leads them astray. Woe betide the man who unwittingly offends him by cutting down his favourite tree, or worse still, for being in any way responsible for his death! His only chance of escape is to make him his family godling and worship him. In Bihār he is often adopted as the village godling, and worship is done to him under a tree, usually a banyan, by erecting an earthen mound on which clay figures of horses and elephants form his equipage, and flowers and fruits of the earth are offered. His priest, known as Bhakta, 'the pious', is not necessarily a Brahman, and he occasionally becomes inspired by the Brahm, uttering oracles which are implicitly believed.[4]

[1] Manu, *Laws*, viii. 380, 381, ix. 235, xi. 55.
[2] Grant Duff, ii. 62 note. [3] *B. G.* x. 440 note.
[4] Gait, *C. R. Bengal*, i. 198 f.

The Betāl, Baitāla, or Vetāla, best known from the collection of folk-tales known as Vetāla-panchavinsati, or Betāl Pachīsi, the twenty-four tales of the demons told by a Vetāla to King Vikramāditya,[1] is not, as a rule, malignant, but is often a vagrant Bhūt, entering the body of a person whose own soul is at the time absent. In the Deccan he is propitiated in a stone circle, the central stone of which represents the Betāl, and the others the watchmen guarding him. He is seen at night going in procession, holding a torch in one hand and a sword in the other, clad in silver and gold, with richly draped elephants, horses, and litters. A man who sees him is believed to be lucky, but he usually swoons in terror. More lucky is he who dares in the strength of some magic spell to approach his litter and ask a favour. His shape is that of a human being, but he sometimes looks fierce and cruel, he is dressed in green, with a cane in his right hand and a conch-shell trumpet in the left, wearing the rosary of a Siva worshipper, the Rudrāksha, ' eye of Rudra ', made of beads of the plant *Elaeocarpus ganitrus*, carrying also a piece of burning cow-dung and flowers of the Rui tree (*Calotropis gigantea*), of which, like Hanumān, the ape-god, he is very fond. He dislikes women, never possesses them, but he is a special patron of sorcerers.[2]

The Bīr or Vīra, ' hero ', usually classed among the Bhūts, is a malignant creature who appears in many forms. In Mirzapur one variety, known as Kharhar Bīr, ' tumult, clatter ', often appears, but the people can give no clear account of him save that he brings disease on man and beast. At Nāgpur there is Gendā Bīr, a woman tired of life who, instead of burning herself, jumped from a tree and died.[3] Kerār Bir, famous in the United Provinces, is said to have occupied the site of the present fort at Jaunpur, where he became such a pest to the neighbourhood that the hero Rāma waged war against him, cut off his head and limbs, and flung him to the four quarters of the sky, leaving his trunk in the form of a shapeless block of stone which is now worshipped—the Rāma legend being an aetiological explanation of the form of his image. When the British, it is said, blew up

[1] Macdonell, *Hist. Sanskrit Lit.*, 375; Somadeva, ii. 232 ff.; Sir R. Burton, *Vikram and the Vampire*, 1870.

[2] *B. G.* xviii, part iii, 388.

[3] *A. S. R.* xvii. 1.

the fort they failed to damage the stone which represents him.[1] At Chamba in the Panjab the Ranbīr, 'forest heroes', are deified champions of olden time, who live in trees, haunt precipices, waterfalls, and cross-roads, at which places they are propitiated because they cause sickness, especially to women. Some of them, like Narsingh, a name also applied to Vishnu in his man-lion incarnation, and Kālabīr, 'the black hero', visit wives in the absence of their husbands, and if the husband on his return finds the Bīr in human form and in occupation he is sure to die unless he offers a sacrifice. Kailubīr is the *numen* of abortion, and is worshipped in the form of the sickle which every Gaddi shepherd carries. He is said to be father of all the Nāg or serpent godlings, and if he is not duly propitiated he causes landslips in the valleys. Sendhubīr, the 'whistling' demon, apparently a form of Rudra-Siva, the storm god of the Veda, is very malignant, causing madness, burning houses, and stealing crops.[2] In Bombay storms are worshipped in the name of the Satvīr, or 'seven heroes', who scour the fields and gardens at night. The village headman carrying a pole hung with streamers worships them by killing a buffalo with one stroke of his sword. Then the spirit of the heroes enters one of their descendants who is scourged with a rope until the spirit enters the scourger. Elsewhere images are raised in their name to persons who have died in battle or by accident.[3] These demons who roam about the country at night closely resemble the personage known in Southern India as Aiyanār or Ayyappa, 'honoured father', or Sāsta, 'ruler', who makes war against evil spirits and pursues them in his nightly raids.[4]

In the lower Himalaya, a land of forests and ravines, dangerous river crossings, heights where the traveller is exposed to faintness attributed to spirit agency, storms, thunder and lightning, avalanches and landslips, there is a class of demons who seem, in many cases, to be impersonations of the powers of Nature in her more terrible form. One of these demons, Airi, said to be the ghost of a hunter who was killed, is accompanied by fairies who, like the Churel, have their feet turned backwards, and by

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 1. [2] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 215, 645, ii. 269; *id.*, *C. R.* i. 130.
[3] *B. G.* xi. 308, xvi. 537; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 40, 129.
[4] Oppert, 504 ff.

two litter-bearers and a pack of hounds with bells round their necks. Whoever hears their bark is sure to suffer some calamity. He is much given to expectoration, and his saliva is so venomous that it wounds those on whom it falls, and the only cure is by incantations and rubbing the affected part with the branch of a tree. 'Those who see Airi face to face die of fright at his awful appearance, or are burnt up with the flashing of his eye, or are torn to pieces by his dogs, or have their livers extracted and eaten by the fairies who accompany him. But should any one be fortunate enough and survive, the demon discloses hidden treasures to them. The treasure-trove thus discovered varies in value, from gold mohurs to old bones.' His temples are in solitary places, where he is worshipped in the bright fortnight of Chait (March–April), when a bonfire is lighted, drums are beaten, and one after another the persons sitting near it become possessed, are called his 'slaves', and are marked by a red cloth tied round their heads and by the wallets in which they collect alms. While in this state they bathe twice, and only once during the twenty-four hours, allow no one to touch them as they consider other men impure, and during his festival no one except themselves is allowed to touch the trident and stones in Airi's temple. Milk and other kinds of food offered to him are consumed by the worshippers, water is sprinkled over the images or stones in his temple, with the prayer, 'Hallowed godling! Be pleased with me, forgive my trespasses, and accept the kid which is offered to thee! I am devoid of understanding: thou are the knower of hearts!' When the kid is sacrificed it is crowned with a garland, rice is scattered over its head, and at last water is poured over it. As it shakes itself to get rid of it, the action is taken as a sign that the godling has accepted the offering, and then the head of the victim is cut off with a Kukri or curved knife. If it does not shake itself, or if it bleats it is supposed that the victim is not accepted, and it is released.[1] Airi is now on the way to promotion as a manifestation of Siva because he shares with him the trident as his emblem, and in some places his shrine stands in a holy cedar grove.[2]

[1] Atkinson, ii. 895 ff.: on the victim shivering see p. 107 above, and Biddulph, 131; Thurston, *T. C.* iii. 466, iv. 59; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 103.
[2] Oldham, 109.

Along the lower Himalaya the Acheri are ghosts of little children, who live on the tops of mountains and descend at night to hold their revels in more convenient places. It is fatal to encounter their train, and they especially dislike things of red colour. When little girls fall ill the Acheri is supposed to have cast her shadow on them. The Deo, of whom more will be said, are ordinary hill demons, some of whom are obnoxious to men, others to cattle. Rūniya is the demon of the avalanche and landslip, moving about at night, riding on a rock, the rattling of which announces his approach. If he takes a fancy to a woman he haunts her in her dreams, she wastes away, and finally falls a victim to his passion.[1]

It will have been seen that some of these demons are the malignant ghosts of the dead, while others seem to be impersonations of the powers of Nature, the awe and mystery of the mountains and forests, or of night and its terrors.

To return to the plains—the Dāno, the Vedic Dānava, connected with Vitra, one of the atmospheric demons,[2] is now becoming anthropomorphized and is connected with the Bīr or 'hero' and his brethren. In Bengal he is included among the village godlings, worshipped in the form of a stone daubed with streaks of vermilion, and set up outside the house.[3] The tribes on the Vindhyan-Kaimūr ranges say that he comes at night like the nightmare, and grips their throats till they are nearly choked.

The modern Dait has little connexion with the Vedic Daitya, 'sons of Diti', enemies of the gods.[4] In the United Provinces he dwells in a tree, appearing in front like a human being, but hollow behind, a mere husk without a backbone, like the Hadal of Bombay.[5] He shows himself at night in his tree in a flash of fire and smoke, and he is sometimes seen flying to another tree close by. In Mirzapur he, too, is associated with the Bīr or 'heroes'; two of this group, Akata Bīr and Lahataura Bīr, live with the Dait in trees, go about at night carrying torches and dancing. They are propitiated by an offering of a Kalasa, or holy water-pot, and some greenery.[6]

The Dait or Daitya is connected with the custom of religious suicide. Buddhism condemns suicide, but if a Jain finds that

[1] Atkinson, ii. 831; *Asiatic Res.* xvi. 137.
[2] Macdonell, *V. M.* 158 ff.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* i. 303.
[4] Macdonell, *V. M.* 123.
[5] Campbell, *Notes*, 150.
[6] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 51, 130.

he cannot resist his passions, or is so disabled that he cannot endure the prescribed austerities, he may give up his life, and he may do this when the twelve years' period of asceticism has enabled him to reach Nirvāna.[1] Manu allows a man overcome by disease or serious trouble to go straight to the north-east, living on water and air till he succumbs, and a Brahman who has got rid of his body in this way obtains the heaven of Brahman.[2] Following this rule even at the present day pilgrims have sacrificed their lives by pressing onward through snow and ice into the depths of the Himalaya. In the Patār plateau in Rajputana 'the most conspicuous object is a projecting ledge named Daitya Kāhār, or "Giant's bone", on which those who are in search of ease jump from above. This is called the Vīra-jhamp, or "warriors' leap", and is made in fulfilment of vows either for temporal or future good. Although most of the leapers perish, some instances of escape are recorded. The love of offspring is said to be the principal motive to this pious act of saltation; and I was very gravely told of one poor woman whose philoprogenitive bump was so great that she vowed to take the leap herself with her issue; and such, says the legend, was her faith that both escaped.'[3]

In the Central Provinces women of the Jasondhi caste, employed to sing the praises of chiefs, if they are childless, vow to dedicate their first-born son as a Karohla, another name of the caste, and it is said that such children were bound to sacrifice themselves to the goddess Devi in one of three ways: they went to Benares and were cut in two by a sword; or to Badari-nārāyan, a shrine in the Himalaya, where they were frozen to death; or to Dhaulagiri, the great mountain in Nepal, where they threw themselves down from a rock, one of them occasionally escaping death.[4] In the Mahādeo hills overlooking the valley of the Narbada, a fair used to be held in which young men were accustomed to sacrifice themselves in fulfilment of their mothers' vows. A childless woman used to vow to offer her first-born son to Siva. He visited the chief Saiva temples, and at the annual fair threw himself from a height of four or five hundred

[1] Hopkins, 291; *E. R. E.* xii. 25 note, 34.
[2] *Laws*, vi. 31 f.
[3] Tod, iii. 1663.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* i. 369: on the sanctity of the first-born, Rose, *Folk-lore*, xiii. 63, 278 f.

feet, and was dashed to pieces.[1] A similar custom prevailed at the temple of Omkār Māndhāta on the Narbada. The local Purāna says that whoever devotes himself to Kāl Bhairava will receive forgiveness, even if he has killed a Brahman. The devotee was directed to make a figure of the sun on a cloth, to take two flags, a club, and a Chanwar or yak-tail fly-whisk in his hands, and then to proceed joyously to the rock. Whoever cast himself down would be married to a Gándharva, one of the divine singers, but if he fell faint-heartedly his lot would be in hell. If a devotee turned back in terror each step that he took would be equivalent to the guilt of killing a Brahman, but he who boldly cast himself down, each step that he took secured merit equal to the performance of a sacrifice. It is significant that no Brahman was allowed to cast himself from the rock, but a devotee who had broken his vows, a parricide, or one who had committed incest, became sinless by this act of self-sacrifice.[2]

Near the shrine of Kedārnāth, a manifestation of Siva, in the lower Himalaya, twenty or more votaries of the god used to sacrifice themselves in the attempt to ascend the Mahāpanth, or 'Great Way', or by throwing themselves over the precipice known as the Bhairava Jhamp, by which the victim 'expects to have realized in his future state that object and wish for which he expressly devotes himself'.[3] At the shrine of the saint Sakhi Sarwar in the Panjab, there is a cliff some eighty feet high, called the 'Robber's Leap', because a thief, when pursued, threw himself over it, vowing that if he survived he would sacrifice a black heifer to the saint, and he escaped unhurt.[4] The tale is probably based on a custom of religious suicide. At Girnār in Kāthiāwār there is another Bhairava Jhamp, from which ascetics and other devotees were wont to hurl themselves in the hope of being reincarnated in a more happy state in a future birth, a mode of suicide known as Bhrigupata, 'throwing oneself from a precipice', in which the victim, as in the Badwār rite already described,[5] may be regarded as a form of human scapegoat.[6]

[1] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 102 f. [2] Forsyth, 179 ff.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 1; Atkinson, ii. 773, iii. 561.
[4] Rose, *C. R.* i. 133. [5] p. 141 above.
[6] Monier-Williams, 350; Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Scapegoat', 254; *id.*, *Pausanias*, v. 401; *Journal Hellenic Society*, xxxvi. 39.

Night is the time when demons walk abroad, and light and fire scare them. Agni, the Vedic fire-god, has the title of Raksohan, 'slayer of the Rakshasa demons'. Hence it is a general custom to keep a fire burning in the lying-in room, to protect mother and child from evil spirits, but often to the serious injury of both. Prabhus in Bombay keep a lamp lighted for at least ten days near the face of a new-born child, and it is a general custom to wave a light before children in the evening.[1] The careful Hindu housewife will walk through the house at nightfall with a light which she causes to shine in every dark corner to scare evil spirits. Even tribes which bury their dead carry a light with the corpse to the cemetery with the same object. The demon-scaring power of light is also illustrated by the custom of Ārti, or waving lights before a person as a protection, and by the Dīvāli, or annual feast of lights. Bengālis impersonate the dangers of the night under the name Nisha or Nishi, who often comes to a house and calls the owner by his name, but as soon as he rises to open the door he loses his senses and follows him into a dense forest full of thorns, or to the top of a big tree where he is found raving mad in the morning.[2] In the Central Provinces people of low caste offer sacrifices to Rāt Māi, the 'Night Mother', in the dark half of Māgh (January–February). Only members of the family, who fast all day, join in the rite, which consists in collecting lamp-black on a plate held over a lamp and drawing with it lines on the floor, which is followed by the sacrifice of a black he-goat, and no morsel of the meat must be taken outside the house, the rule being that it is cooked and eaten then and there, and offerings of grain and vegetables are made to the head of the victim, placed erect on the floor. The family sit round it singing songs in honour of the Night Mother, and next day his head is eaten, all the refuse being carefully buried beside the main door of the house.[3] Dhanwārs do similar worship to Andhiyāri Maiya, 'Mother Darkness', who rules the dark fortnight of the month.[4]

Among the dreaded visions of the night none are more dreaded than the Ghostly Army. At Faizābād in Oudh people will not

[1] Campbell, *Notes*, 24.
[2] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 199; Lal Behari Day, *Bengal Peasant Life*, 6 f.
[3] Russell, *Bhandāra Gaz.* i. 75.
[4] *Id.*, *T. C.* ii. 496 f.

pass at night along a certain part of the Queen's Road because it is thronged with troops of headless horsemen, the army of the martyr Sayyid Sālār. The great host moves on with noiseless tread, the ghostly horses make no sound, and no words of command are shouted to the squadrons. At Ajmer for some time past a troop of four or five hundred horsemen, armed and dressed in green, have been seen issuing from a valley near the city, and after riding about for a time they mysteriously disappear. They are supposed to be the escort of the Imām Husain, the martyr whose tragical fate is commemorated at the Muharram festival. Scenes of similar tragedies are haunted in the same way. The place where a great railway accident once occurred is haunted by malignant ghosts, and this is proved by the fact that two engines broke down on this spot in some unaccountable way.[1] The Kurmis in the Hardoi District, Oudh, were once defeated, and to this day in the dead of night the lonely watcher in the fields hears from the deserted village mound the shouts of the victorious Brahms and the shrieks of the slaughtered garrison.[2] At Pānipat, after the great battle fought in 1526, the sounds of wailing were long heard in the plain at night, and Sikhs listen to the shrieks of the dying at Chiliānwāla.[3]

The fiends that attack children form a special class. In Bihār the Jilaiya, Jalaiya, or Marchirya, 'Bird of Death', takes the shape of a night-bird, and sucks the blood of any one whose name it hears, and if it flies over the head of a pregnant woman her child will be born a weakling. Women are therefore careful not to call their children by name at night.[4] In the United Provinces Jamhua, whose name is popularly derived from Yama, god of death, and Ghugghua, 'the Owl', grips babies by the throat and stops their breath; both are connected with Chhathī, 'the Sixth Day', the impersonation of infantile lockjaw, due to neglect of sanitary precautions at birth, which at this time is fatal to children.[5] The Mundas try to avert this danger by bathing the mother in a stream or tank, burning the impure mat on which the child slept, lustrating the house with

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 180. [2] *Ibid.* iv. 50.
[3] W. Erskine, i. 437 note; *A. S. R.* xx. 96.
[4] Grierson, 408. [5] Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 292, 432.

water out of a brass vessel in which a copper coin, a few leaves of the sacred Tulasi plant or holy basil (*Ocymum sanctum*), or of the Bel tree (*Aegle marmelos*) have been placed, or with rice beer.[1] Marāthas believe that on the fifth night after a birth Sathi or Chhathi, accompanied by Burmiya, a male fiend, visits the lying-in room, makes the mother insensible, and either kills or disfigures the child; and the Vādvals of Thāna suppose that she comes on the fifth night in the form of a cat, hen, or dog, and devours the heart and skull of the baby. So they surround the bed with a magic circle made from a creeper, place an iron knife, scythe, or anvil on the bed, and keep watch all night.[2] The Orāon birth-fiend, Chordeva, 'Thief Godling', besets the mother during labour and for fifteen days after her delivery in the shape of a cat which attacks her womb, the remedy being that the father must keep a fire burning and his wife must live only on gruel.[3] In Bihār, for the protection of the child, on the twelfth day a square is marked out with vermilion on the house-wall, rings are fastened for the first time on the arms and feet of the child, and some money is put into its hand.[4] Chamārs in the United Provinces for the first six days never leave the mother alone, make her wear an iron ring, place an iron implement under her pillow, and on the sixth night members of the household keep watch and guard a lighted lamp lest an insect may extinguish it, in which case it is believed that the child will die. Figures of Shasthi, the 'Sixth Mother', are drawn on the wall, the child's navel is branded, and at the critical time seeds of mustard and dill, or bran and salt, are waved over the mother's head, and then thrown into a vessel containing fire; the baby is weighed against grain, which is given to the midwife; if the danger is attributed to the birth-fiend Jamhua, the ear of a pig is cut and its blood is rubbed on the foreheads of the mother and her child.[5]

The Pisācha, a term meaning 'flesh-eater'[6] is a kind of ghost, usually the ghost of a man who has died an unnatural death, or for whom the prescribed funeral rites have not been performed.

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, 457 f.
[2] Campbell, *Notes*, 387.
[3] Dalton, 251 f.
[4] Grierson, 390.
[5] Briggs, 65 ff., with photographs.
[6] *J. R. A. S.* 1905, pp. 285 ff.

They haunt cremation grounds and eat human flesh.[1] A Pisācha is also said to be an evil spirit produced by men's vices, the ghost of a liar, adulterer, criminal, or of one who died insane. In the Veda they are called Kravyād, 'eaters of raw flesh', and they have been identified by some authorities with savage tribes of the northern frontiers, and the term Paisāchi has been applied by Sir G. Grierson to a group of languages in that region.[2] In Kashmīr they are known as Yaksha, 'speeders', a name applied to Buddhist and Brahmanical demi-gods figured in the Ajanta and Elephanta caves, and in later times in Western India to Persian or Musalmān invaders.[3] In modern usage Pisācha-bhāsha, 'goblin language', means gibberish or English. In the folk-tales they are credited with the power of causing disease:

'Rise up at the last moment of night, and with dishevelled hair and naked, and without rinsing your mouth, take two handfuls of rice as large as you can grasp with your two hands, and muttering the form of words go to a place where four roads meet, and there place the two handfuls of rice, and return in silence without looking behind you. Do so always till that Pisācha appears, and himself says to you, "I will put an end to your ailment." Then receive his aid gladly, and he will remove your complaint.'[4]

The Rakshasa, Rākshasa, Rākhas, or Rāchhas, 'the injurer', or by a euphemistic folk derivation, 'preserver', like the Eumenides, is in the Veda a terrestrial demon or goblin, the enemy of mankind, appearing as a dog, vulture, owl, or some bird of night, dangerous at times of pregnancy and child-birth, prowling round the bride at her wedding, when little staves were shot into the air to pierce their eyes. They appeared in the evening or at night and fled before the dawn, manifesting themselves as falling stars and at the dark time of the new moon that belongs to evil spirits and the souls of the dead. The sacrifice was particularly exposed to their attacks, and they were naturally identified, without any special application,

[1] For cannabalism in India see Crooke, *Things Indian*, 266. The Padaeans of Herodotus (iii. 99), said to eat their sick relations, were possibly the Battas of the Malay Peninsula (*E. R. E.* iii. 203).

[2] *E. R. E.* x. 43 ff.

[3] Macdonell, *V. M.* 164; *B. G.* x. 133, 235 f., xii. 493, xiv. 73.

[4] Somadeva, i. 255 f.

with the hostile indigenous tribes, foes of the Indo-Aryans, who worried the early anchorites abiding in the great forest dividing Northern India from the Deccan.[1] The writers of the Mahābhārata describe them as fierce, tawny in hue, with adamantine teeth, stained with blood, their hair matted, thighs long and massive, their feet five in number, their bellies large, fingers set backwards, harsh in temper, with ugly features, voices loud and terrible, wearing rows of tinkling bells tied to their bodies, and their throats coloured blue. Their portion is the food on which some one has sneezed, in which there are worms and insects, the leavings of men, and that which is trodden on and mixed with tears. They bring forth offspring the very day they conceive, and they can change their forms at will. They appropriate untimely gifts, are strongest just at break of day, and they put forth their powers of deception in the two twilights.[2] In many ways they resemble the ogres of the Buddhist tales who have red eyes, do not wink, cast no shadow, and are free from all fear.[3]

In the folk-tales Rākshasas change their forms as they please, their breath is a roaring wind, they can spread their arms a distance of eighty miles, and discover human beings by their smell, they can carry men leagues into the air, and if their heads are cut off they grow again.[4] They possess kingdoms and enormous wealth which they bestow on those they favour. A tale is told of a Raja of Ayodhya in Oudh who was driven by the Musalmāns into Nepāl. One night the Rāni's slave-girl, whose paramour was a Rākshasa from Ceylon, was going to sweep the floor of the palace, when her lover without her knowledge gave her a golden broom, and when she used it she left specks of gold-dust on the floor. When the Raja heard of this he sent for the Rākshasa, who gave him a wonderful diamond necklace. At the Raja's request he built for him a temple in honour of the household goddess, Tulja Bhawāni, and he started to erect a great wall round the city, but this remained incomplete because the cock crew before it was finished, and the Rākshasa, like other demons, was forced to fly before the coming dawn.[5]

[1] Macdonell, *V. M.* 162 ff.; Macdonell-Keith, ii. 516; Muir, *O. S. T.* ii. 389 ff.

[2] *Mahābhārata*, i. 453, 457, ix. 167 f.

[3] *Jātaka*, v. 18.

[4] Somadeva, Index, s.v.; Knowles, 43.

[5] D. Wright, 174.

The female, the Rākshasi, is also a cannibal, who seduces men in the guise of a lovely damsel, besets cities and demands the tribute of a human being.[1] In a strange tale recorded in the Mahābhārata, Jarasandha, Raja of Magadha, was born in two halves from two Rānis, but Sava, a Rākshasi, joined the parts together and restored him to his father, who instituted a great festival in his honour.[2]

Nowadays Rākshasas live in trees and cause vomiting and indigestion to those who intrude on their domains at night, they mislead night travellers, and are always greedy and in quest of food. If the light goes out while a man is eating at night he should cover it with his hands to save it from the Rākshasas.[3] They are always fighting with the gods, and the scenes of their battles are marked by strata of red ferruginous clay or by a river known as Lohu, or flowing with blood.[4] Their finger-nails are poisonous like those of Europeans, who for this reason use knives and forks instead of eating with their fingers as respectable people should do, and their touch produces insensibility or even death. They often disguise themselves as old women and have very long hair, a lock of which, if you can secure it, is a potent charm. So malignant are they that it would be difficult to avoid them, but fortunately, like their brethren in other lands, they are generally fools, and when the distressed heroine has fallen into their clutches they often disclose to her the secret of their power, or a victim has only to address the monsters as 'Uncle' to secure his escape.[5] If a boy can be induced to eat the brains of a corpse he will be turned into a Rākshasa, and they are noted cannibals. Rasālu, the Panjab hero, killed seven of them who used to eat a man daily, and Gurung Māpa, one of the gang, was induced to give up the practice of eating corpses by the grant of a plot of land and the annual offering of a buffalo and some rice.[6]

Like others of their kind, Rākshasas have the power of lengthening their bodies, and the enormous bones found in the Tertiary strata of the Sivālik range are confidently attributed

[1] *Ibid.* 86 ff.
[2] J. Muir, *O. S. T.* iv. 247 f.
[3] *P. N. Q.* ii. 132.
[4] *J. A. S. B.* 1847. p. 582
[5] Miss Frere, 32, 58, 62, 208, 268 f.; Knowles 47.
[6] Atkinson, ii. 352 note; *A. S. R.* ii. 21.

to them. Corpses, too, have the power of lengthening themselves in an uncanny way, so the Kanets of the Simla hills drive two pegs, one at the head, the other at the foot of the corpse, to prevent demons from entering it, in which case the body will stretch to an enormous height and devour the surviving relatives.[1] Women, too, can lengthen themselves, as in the Gujarāt story of Rānji, a Rājput, who asked a Chāran girl, who was really a Sakti or embodiment of the female divine power, for a drink of water, and she extended her hand so as to reach him as he sat on his horse. He promptly dismounted, walked reverently round her, and prostrated himself. 'Ask a boon,' she said, and he answered, 'May I call on thee for aid when calamity overtakes me!' 'Be it so!' she said, and she aided him in time of danger, so that in gratitude he installed her as his Kuldevi or family goddess.[2]

Rākshas have been produced in modern times. Hemādpant or Hemādri, a learned scholar, was minister of the Yādava Rajas of Deogiri, and so many temples, reservoirs, and wells in the northern and central Deccan are attributed to him that it is said that he must have been a Rākshasa, for no one else could have built them.[3] Visaladeva, the famous Chauhān king of Ajmer, defeated by Sabuktigīn in A. D. 1001, is said to have been so oppressive to his subjects that he was turned into a Rākshasa, in which condition he went on devouring his subjects until one of his grandsons offered himself as a victim to appease his inordinate appetite: 'The language of innocent affection made its way to the heart of the Rākshasa, who recognized his offences and winged his flight to the Jumna.'[4] Hindus believe that a malignant Musalmān ghost becomes a Rākshasa, and hence in Bengal he is known as Māmdo, which seems to be a euphemistic title, Arabic Mamdūh, 'the praised, the eminent'.[5]

Another group of these malevolent demons is that of the Asuras, 'the living, spiritual', a title in the Veda applied to the malignant beings who war against the gods.[6] By another speculation the word is derived from the Assyrians.[7] A story from Mirzapur tells how two of them made a pact that he who

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 873.
[2] Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 278.
[3] *B. G.* i, part ii, 248 ff., xii. 479 f.
[4] Tod.
[5] Gait, *C. R.* i. 199.
[6] Macdonell, *V. M.* i. 156 ff.
[7] *J. R. A. S.* 1921, pp. 362 ff.

succeeded in building a fort in a single night should win the game and his defeated rival should lose his life. They set to work on two adjoining hills and one of them, losing his tools, struck a light to search for them. His rival, thinking that the sun was rising and that the other must have finished his work, fled precipitately. So one fort stands complete, and on the other hill only a few rough boulders, which originated the legend, mark the site. From Gokarn in Kanara comes a similar tale of Visvakarma, the demon architect, who planned to build a temple in a single night, but Rāvana, the great demon of Lanka, who was angry at losing a Linga, turned himself into a cock and crew long before daybreak, by which time the temple was complete except the spire, which it lacks to this day, the legend being invented to explain its absence.[1]

To close the catalogue of malignant spirits or demons—many bogies or bugaboos are invoked to frighten children. One of the best known of them is Havva, the Prākrit form of the Sanskrit Bhūta, and Humma, who is popularly supposed to be the ghost of the Mughal Emperor Humāyūn. In Bombay the Goghar, Lascar seamen from the port of Gogha in Kāthiāwār, are called to send children to sleep, but others say that the word is really Ghoghar, connected with Ghuggu, the owl. In the same class are Neki Bībi, 'Good Lady', the euphemistic name of some more dangerous spirit; Māno, 'the Cat'; Bhākur or Bhonkar; Bhokasva, a wizard who brings men to the grave; or Dhokar-kasva, the old man who carries away naughty children in his bag, who represent Raw-head and Bloody Bones of our nurseries.[2] Nepalese mothers used to threaten their children, 'Gurang Māpa take them!' until one day the Rākshasa took them at their word and started eating troublesome babies.[3]

Birth magic forms an important chapter in the beliefs of the peasantry.[4] In connexion with this reference may be made to the custom of the Couvade, 'hatching, man-childbed', in which, while the mother does her usual work, the husband is treated as an invalid, in addition to, or instead of, the woman. The basis

[1] *B. G.* xv, part ii, 289 note. [2] *Ind. Ant.* iii. 278; Grierson, 408.
[3] D. Wright, 169.
[4] O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 325 ff.; Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 233; Martin, *C. R.* i. 150 ff.

of the custom is to express the close relationship between husband, wife, and child, to prevent danger to the two latter from any action of the first, and to serve as a recognition of the father's parentage. It does not appear in matrilinear societies where the kinship of the father is more or less ignored, and it is most frequent in those stages where mother-right is giving place to father-right.[1] The Sonjhara husband in the Central Provinces lies prone in the house for three days after the birth of the child, is given ginger and raw sugar on the fourth, thus undergoing the usual treatment of a woman after child-birth, the theory being that this is a sort of compensation for the trouble sustained by his wife in bearing the child.[2] A woman of the Pomla basket-makers in Baroda immediately after delivery is made to drink the juice of the bark of the Nīm tree (*Azadirachta indica*) with some oil, and then leaves the house and does not return for five days, during which her husband is shut up and takes the medicine usually given after child-birth. They explain that this is not merely the observance of a caste custom, but that the man does actually become indisposed, a sign of the favour of their goddess Lakshmi Māta.[3] When the wife of a Korava in Bombay is taken with labour the husband goes to bed, is fed on chicken and spiced mutton broth, rubbed with oil, and treated as a patient.[4]

Elsewhere, as in the Panjab, where there is no clear evidence of the Couvade, the husband is expected to do something to assist his wife's delivery. He is made to stroll about on the roof of the house, to jump over his wife's bed, to pull her great toes, or, if he is a Musalmān, to face westward and flap his shirt about—his movements contributing in a magical way to those of his wife. During the labour his trouser-string is washed in water which is given to his wife.[5] In Assam the husband while his wife is pregnant must not go about at night lest the demon Sarapa may return with him and injure the woman and her child, and for ten days after the birth he will not go out in a high wind or cloudy weather lest the wind godling may

[1] *E. R. E.* ii. 635 f.; Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, ii. 400 ff.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 511: cf. i. 119 f.
[3] G. H. Desai, *C. R.* i. 179 f.; J. B. Dalal, *C. R.* i. 474; Kealy, *C. R.* i. 165.
[4] Mead–Macgregor, *C. R.* i. 121.
[5] Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 299.

injure the child; the Lushai father will not cut open the bodies of any game or sever the legs lest the child should be born without legs, and if he eats the flesh of an animal found dead his child will be still-born; he avoids hard work which is thought to be injurious to his child's health.[1]

The father, as in the case of a child born in the Mūl asterism,[2] is prevented from seeing his child. Radders in the Dhārwār District do not allow the father to see the lamp being waved over his child's head to repel evil spirits, because if he sees it the child will sicken; Jains in the same District, when a child is born, do not allow the father to dose it with honey and oil; Chitpāvans of the Belgaum District do not allow the father to look at his new-born child, and he must for the first time see only its reflection in a vessel of ghi; when the son of a Beni Israel Jew is being circumcised the father sits apart, his head covered with a veil; and when Musalmāns in Poona sacrifice a goat after the birth of a child, all join in the feast except the parents, who must not touch the meat.[3]

Certain places are believed to be specially haunted by Bhūts or evil spirits.

First, they naturally infest burial or cremation grounds, which are particularly occupied by the dreaded Bhūt, Masān. Such Bhūts often assume the appearance of uncanny creatures like owls and bats, which show themselves at night. In the North-West Frontier Province it is believed that owls, foxes, monkeys, and bears are dangerous inasmuch as they are abodes of the spirits of the dead.[4] In the Central Provinces Ghasiyas will not call any one by name when they think that an owl is within hearing, because it will go on repeating it, and this will cause the death of its owner; Gonds think the Sūkhi, or 'drying-up' disease, a form of consumption, is due to the machinations of an owl that has heard the child's name or has secured a piece of its clothing; Lohār blacksmiths, that a man who eats the bones of an owl will become an idiot.[5] If an owl hoots at night it is a lucky omen, but if you hear it hooting in a burial-ground you are sure to die, and if you speak of a monkey

[1] McSwiney, *C. R.* i. 76 f.
[2] p. 43 above.
[3] *B. G.* xxii. 119, 141; Campbell, *Notes*, 410.
[4] Latimer, *C. R.* i. 13.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 29, 88, iv. 125.

or an owl in the morning you will get no breakfast.[1] Hence the flesh of an owl is often used in black magic. Chamārs believe that if you give an owl wine to drink and pronounce the name of your enemy to the bird, he will surely die, but the owl must be carefully watched to make sure that he hears no other name while the charm is being worked.[2] Its flesh is potent in charms, and every owl possesses a certain bone which, if you can secure it, will make other people subservient to you ; if you keep an owl awake for two days and a night it will tell you where the bone is to be found. If you shut up an owl in a room, go in naked, close the door and feed the bird all night with meat, you will gain magical power, and eating the eyes of an owl gives the power of seeing at night. If on a Tuesday or Sunday a man goes to a place where he hears an owl hooting, strips himself naked, and makes a knot in a string every time he hears a hoot, the thread becomes an amulet which, tied on a man's arm, drives off fever.[3]

Secondly, the awe and loneliness of deserts naturally suggests that they are haunted by Bhūts. Aranyāni, the Vedic goddess of the jungle and the wild, is an impersonation of the risk of entering such places.[4] In the deserts of the western Panjab during prairie fires and at dead of night the lonely herdsmen used to hear cries rising from the ground and shouts of 'Mār! Mār!' 'Strike! Strike!' raised by the ghosts of men killed in old frontier fights, and until recently men were afraid to venture there, except in large parties, through fear of these supernatural beings.[5] In some deserts these uncanny noises have been attributed to the Reg-i-ravān, or moving sands, which produce sonorous sounds.[6] Many desolate hills and jungles in the lower Himalaya and the Vindhyan–Kaimūr ranges are haunted by Bhūts which cause those who venture there to be attacked by colic, and when the British Residency was first established the Nepalese, who objected to the intrusion of foreigners, carefully selected as a site for the building a barren patch of land supposed to be unhealthy and the abode of demons.[7]

[1] *P. N. Q.* i. 87.
[2] Briggs, 170 f.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 351.
[4] Macdonell, *V. M.* 154.
[5] J. Wilson, *Sirsa S. R.* 32 ; *B. G.* viii. 451.
[6] Balfour, *Cyclopaedia*, iii. 380 ; Lecture by Carus Wilson, *The Times*, 4 January 1913.
[7] D. Wright, 15 note.

Thirdly, old ruins are haunted by Bhūts. Such places are uncanny from their loneliness and because their desolation implies that the luck of the original owners has become exhausted. There are many ruined houses scattered through Indian towns because they are so unlucky that it is dangerous to repair or rebuild them.[1] It has been suggested that this theory of luck explains the custom of changing royal capitals, as at Delhi and elsewhere.[2] It is only archaeologists, who are supposed to be in search of buried treasure, who dare to excavate such places. When an impious Raja tried to excavate the Stūpas in which Nandarāja hid his treasures, 'the earth shook, the mountains bent, and the clouds darkened the sun, whilst from the Stūpas came a great sound like thunder', so that the Raja and his forces retreated in dismay.[3] Dr. Buchanan once found an image, and the people 'on my proposing to dig it out, said that a man who had made the attempt had been punished for his temerity by a sudden death. The Rājput to whom the village belonged said he would willingly take the bricks to build his house were he not afraid of the consequences'.[4] General Cunningham in one of his archaeological reports states that while he was excavating a ruin his elephant bolted away, and all the people agreed that this accident was due to the anger of the Bhūt of the place who had been disturbed, and the same explanation was given of a storm which occurred when Mr. Benett was exploring the ruins of Sahet-Mahet.[5] It is believed that treasure is buried in the Buddhist Stūpa at Sopāra in the Thāna District, Bombay, but it is said that the two men who first excavate it will lose their lives, and when the materials of an ancient embankment at a village in Khāndesh were used to build a well, the people were so severely attacked by guinea-worm that the village was abandoned.[6] In the Konkan it is believed that all treasure buried underground, all old caves, and all ruined houses are guarded by the earth spirits in the shape of a hairy serpent, which attacks only those who seek to remove the property entrusted to its charge.[7] A polished rock at Jāynagar holds the treasure of Raja Indradyumna,

[1] Masson, 149. [2] *Ind. Ant.* xxxii. 416. [3] Beal, ii. 94.
[4] Buchanan, i. 414. [5] *Oudh Gaz.* iii. 286.
[6] *B. G.* xii. 13 note, 467; xiv. 339. [7] Campbell, *Notes*, 150 f.

sealed with a magic seal. He had promoted to the highest honour one of his officers who aspired to marry the Raja's daughter. Her father was wroth, ordered a cave to be excavated in which he stored his treasure, induced his servant to enter it, whereupon he let down a trap-door and sealed it. The ghost of his victim still guards the place and revenges itself on any one who dares to explore it.[1] Many persons have found such treasures, but their niggardliness has always brought them to ruin. But it is sometimes possible to outwit the Bhūt guardian. In a Kumaun story a man with the help of his family trapped a Bhūt at a cremation ground and so frightened him that he surrendered five jars full of gold coins, but a friend, less valiant, who tried to blackmail the Bhūt lost his courage, and he and his family were slain by the offended Bhūt.[2]

Mines and caves are guarded in the same way. The people of Sikhim dread all mining work because 'they believe that the ores and veins of metal are the stored treasures of the earth spirits; and that the removal of their treasure enrages these malignant spirits, who visit the robbery with all sorts of ill-luck, plagues of sickness on men and cattle, and failure of their too scanty crops'.[3] As a measure of propitiation when iron-workers of Manipur begin on a new deposit, they offer to the local godling the hair from the end of the tail and fetlocks and a little blood drawn from the ear of a buffalo.[4] At a mica mine in the Patna District 'accidents would seem to be frequent, which is not attributed to the want of skill in the workmen, but to the anger of the gods. A stone-cutter who was in my service, a Hindu of pure birth, was going into one of the shafts in order to break off a specimen, when the guide, a Muhammadan, pulled him back in alarm, and said, "Pull off your shoes. Will you profane the abode of the gods?"'[5] The jungle tribes of Mirzapur tell of a cave occupied by Mahādāni Deo, 'the Great-Gift Demon', whose white horse has been seen tied up outside, but when any one approaches it disappears. Some of these caves are so dangerous that not even the Baiga hedge-priest dares to enter them, and people climbing the hill where they are situated sacrifice a goat at the foot before they make the attempt.

[1] *A. S. A.* x. 117. [2] Ganga Datt Upreti, 10 f.
[3] Waddell, *Himalayas*, 101. [4] Shakespear, 69. [5] Buchanan, i. 247.

In another a Dāno lives who must be propitiated by an offering of a black and white cock, but when he is enraged people hear strange sounds at night warning them that cholera is coming, and any one who goes near the place suffers from an attack of colic.[1]

This respect for caves is often due to the old custom of cave-burial. It is believed that many of the caves occupied for religious purposes by Buddhists, Hindus, or Jains, or inhabited by ascetics, were used for this purpose, and actual cases of cave-burial have been noticed in Baluchistan.[2] The primal ancestors of some tribes are believed to have issued from caves; that from which the first Gonds appeared is really situated in the Pachmarhi Hill in the Central Provinces, but a later legend invented by Brahmans has shifted it to the Himalaya.[3] As in the well-known legends of Arthur, Karl the Great, or Barbarossa, Angāmi Nāgas believe that Raja Bhīm sleeps in a cave in the hills, whence he will rise to fight the British and rule over all who eat from the wooden platter.[4] Musalmāns have their tale of the Ashābu-l-Kahfs, the Seven Sleepers, which appears in the Korān, and has passed thence into popular belief.[5]

The gods also occupy caves, usually of natural formation. The famous Amarnāth caves in Kashmir are entered by ascetics in a state of nudity, who worship a block of ice as the Linga of Siva.[6] In a cavern in Mahi Kāntha is a stone called Dudhil Māta, the 'Milk Mother', from which milk-white water drips, and women who cannot nurse their children allow a few drops of it to fall on their bodies, and find that their supply of milk has increased.[7]

Empty houses, again, are haunted by Bhūts. Forest tribes, like Bhīls, abandon their huts when deaths take place, as they are supposed to be haunted or unlucky.[8] Among Gonds, 'if one or two persons die in a house in one year, the family often leave it and make another home. On quitting the old house they knock a hole in the wall to go out, so as to avoid going out by the front door. This is usually done when the deaths have

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 69.
[2] *Ind. Ant.* xxxii. 342 f.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 47 ff.; Forsyth, 187 ff.
[4] Hutton, *Angami*, 13.
[5] Ja'far Sharīf, 137 f.
[6] Drew, 222; Lawrence, 41; Oman, 268 f.; *J. R. A. I.* xlix. 245.
[7] *B. G.* ix, part i, 388 f.
[8] *Ibid.* xii. 84.

been due to an epidemic, and it is presumably supposed that the dead men's spirits will haunt the house and cause others to die from spite at their own untimely end. If an epidemic visits a village the Gonds will also frequently abandon it, and make a new village on another site.' [1] When a house is occupied for the first time careful precautions must be taken to expel the Bhūts or Jinn who are in possession. Hindus on the North-Western frontier take an earthen vessel full of water over the threshold and pour oil outside the door to prevent any calamity from entering, and Musalmāns call in a Mullā or a Faqīr to take the necessary precautions.[2] Lhota Nāgas employ the oldest of the men who helped to build the house in driving away evil spirits, which he does by sprinkling the inside of the house with a concoction of beer and ginger, saying, 'We are going to stay here, you go away!' He then marks out the sites of the fire-places, and the owner either makes fire with a fire-stick or fetches it from some other house, after which a meal is cooked and partaken of by the owner, his household and friends, and the old men, who take an omen by strangling and disembowelling a chicken.[3] Bhotias, when they leave their houses to trade, place baskets full of thorns and twigs in the courtyard to repel evil spirits.[4] Bhūts often take up their abode in flowers, and it is dangerous for children to smell them. Midday, when Bhūts are said to be engaged in cooking, and in evening when they make their rounds, are particularly dangerous times, and women avoid walking about gardens at these times, a belief also expressed in classical literature.[5] The superstition possibly rests on the fact that the shadow is particularly small at noon and excessively great at sunset. Bhūts, like the Jinn, frequent latrines and other filthy places, and care must be taken on entering such rooms. This, as Sir J. Campbell suggested, may be due to some vague experience of the disease-breeding qualities of dirt, and a Marātha proverb runs: 'Where there is cleanliness there is neither Bhūt nor Pisācha.' [6]

There are many characteristics by which Bhūts can be

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 93 f.: cf. Frazer, *F. L. O. T.* iii. 232 ff.
[2] Latimer, *C. R.* i. 92 f.: cf. Crooke, 'The House in India from the point of view of Sociology and Folk-lore', *Folk-lore*, xxix. 113 ff.
[3] Mills, 34.
[4] C. Sherring, *Mem. A. S. B.* i. 116.
[5] *E. R. E.* iv. 602.
[6] Campbell, *Notes*, 169.

recognized. They eat filthy food, and as they are always thirsty they are ever in search of water, no matter how impure it may be. They are also very fond of milk, and careful mothers do not allow their children to leave the house after drinking fresh milk. If she cannot prevent them from going out she puts some ashes or salt in the child's mouth to scare the Bhūt. A Bhūt never sits on the ground, possibly because it dreads the Earth spirits, but hovers in the air. For this reason, at shrines attended by the lower castes, a brick or a peg is set up on which the Bhūt can perch.[1] On the same principle, when the bones of a cremated corpse are being taken to some holy river the jar containing them is hung on a tree to allow the ghost to have access to them; the Orāons hang the bone-jar on a post in front of the house.[2] After the Khāsis deposit the bones in a cairn they arrange a flat table-stone on which the ghost may sit; Gonds erect as a home for the ghost a small stone seat in front of the memorial stone; Bhīls, in honour of the ghost, place in the Devasthān, or abode of spirits, beams of timber sometimes twelve feet long and poised on two uprights in the shape of a rough bench.[3]

Like other goblins, Bhūts cast no shadow.[4] They generally speak with a nasal twang, the Pisācha-bhāsha, to which reference has been made elsewhere.[5] They particularly object to the smell of turmeric, a 'sacred plant', which has great power over demons.[6] Some of their throats are as narrow as a needle's point, but they can drink gallons of water at a time; some have their feet turned backwards; some, like Brahman Bhūts, are wheat-coloured or white; others, like the Kāfir, or ghost of a negro, of whom a notable example haunts a street in Calcutta, are black and specially dreaded. Bhūts, male and female, like the Vidyādhari, 'possessors of knowledge', in the folk-tales, cohabit with mortals, and, as in the case of the Nāgas or snake deities, tales of the Swan Maiden cycle are not uncommon.[6]

There are various entries by which Bhūts may possess a man. One is the head. The head of human beings is held in great

[1] *A. S. R.* xvii. 147. [2] Dalton, 261.
[3] Gurdon, 136; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 93; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 165.
[4] *Jātaka*, i. 6; *P. N. Q.* iv. 51. [5] p. 209 above.
[6] Lal Behari Day, *Folk-Tales*, 199: cf. Ja'far Sharif, 66.

respect, and there is a strong feeling against allowing any one to stand or walk over the heads of persons sitting in the lower story of a house, a taboo reinforced by the risk of some polluting substance falling on him from above. The Meitheis have been forced to invent an aetiological explanation why the spectators of a boat-race are not permitted to stand on any bridge beneath which the rowers pass.[1] Hence comes the respect for the scalp-lock, the seat of life and power, the cutting off of it being a sign of approaching death.[2] If you can manage to cut off the scalp-lock of a Bhūt he will be your servant for life.[3] When a man in Kumaun is bitten by a snake they pull three hairs from his scalp-lock and strike him three times on the head with the first joint of the middle finger. This kind of blow is usually regarded with terror, as it may cause his soul to leave the skull; here it is apparently used to repel the evil spirit embodied in the venom.[4] When a patient suffers from fever the marrow is removed from a bone and replaced with grain, the patient is made to stand in the sun, a small hole is dug where the shadow of his head happens to fall, and in it the bone and grain are buried, with the invocation, 'O fever! Come where the grain sprouts!' the belief being that it will never return.[5] At a Gond marriage an old man knocks the heads of the pair together in the belief that this causes their spirits to unite.[6] Evil influences are dispersed by the rite known as Ārti, Nichhāvar, or Parachhan, the waving of various things round the head; in Bihār a handful of mustard and dill seeds are waved round the head of a woman after her confinement, and then thrown into the fire.[7] The same result is attained by the wearing of crowns by the pair at marriage and by the veiling of the bride.[8]

Bhūts may enter the body through the mouth and nose, a belief which explains the customs in connexion with sneezing, yawning, or hiccup. Besides these there are involuntary acts which gain importance from their arbitrary character, and are regarded as miraculous because the body in its normal action being the slave and instrument of the owner's will and intention

[1] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 80: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 252 ff.
[2] Thurston, *T. C.* iii. 175 f.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 180.
[4] *Ibid.* iii. 74.
[5] *Ibid.* ii. 9.
[6] Hislop, App. i, p. v.
[7] Grierson, 389.
[8] Halliday, 174 ff.; P. Saintyves, 127; *E. R. E.* ix. 398, xii. 829 f.

now behaves in a way independent of them. The need of purifying the mouth and nose is illustrated by the dabbling with water which is the chief part of the Hindu's daily ritual, and by the Wuzū' or Ghusl of the Musalmāns.[1]

Sneezing is the result of a Bhūt entering or leaving the nose, the latter being the view most generally accepted. The belief dates from early times because we find it in the Buddhist tale of the nun Saccatapāvi, who was so noted for her piety that throughout Benares 'her fame was blazed abroad like as it were that of the Moon or Sun, and natives of Benares, if they sneezed or stumbled, said "Praise be to Saccatapāvi!"'[2] In a second tale of the same collection a goblin was in the habit of devouring any one who did not say 'Long life!' when any one sneezed.[3] In a third tale we read: 'If he escape this also, when he enters that night into his private apartments, he shall sneeze a hundred times; and if some one then does not a hundred times say to him, "God bless you!" he shall fall into the grasp of death.'[4] There is some difference of opinion as to whether a sneeze is auspicious or not, and its import seems to depend on whether it is caused by an entering or retreating Bhūt—the former unlucky, the latter lucky.[5] Deccani Brahmans object to any one sneezing when the marriage necklace is being tied, and if a member of a party of Thugs sneezed when an expedition started it was a bad omen and required expiatory sacrifices, travellers met on this occasion being released.[6] But in the Central Provinces Telis at the moment when rice is thrown on the wedded pair burn chillies, the smoke of which sets the whole company sneezing.[7] In the Deccan if A sneezes when B is beginning a piece of work, B stops for a time and then starts afresh; if A sneezes twice B goes on with his work without stopping; if A sneezes on B's back, B's back is lightly pinched, that is to say, A takes back what he gave; if a man sneezes during a meal some person present calls on him to name his birthplace.[8]

Various forms of congratulation or deprecation are used in the case of sneezing. In the Central Provinces when a man

[1] Stevenson, *Rites*, 211 ff.; Ja'far Sharīf, 125 ff.
[2] *Jātaka*, v. 228.
[3] *Ibid.* ii. 11 ff.
[4] Somadeva, i. 254.
[5] Cf. *Jātaka*, i. 279.
[6] Thurston, *T. C.* i. 105; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 285.
[7] Begbie-Nelson, *Chānda Gaz.* i. 116.
[8] *B. G.* xxii. 50.

sneezes he calls out 'Chhatrapati!' 'Lady with the umbrella!' a title of the goddess Devi.[1] Musalmāns in Western India say 'Alhamdu-llāh!' 'Allāh be praised!' to which some one present should say, 'Yarhamu-ka-llāh!' 'Allāh have mercy on you!' and Parsis call out, 'May Ahriman, the evil spirit, be broken!'[2] Hindus name some god, 'Rām! Rām!' and 'if he neglects to do this, he commits as great a sin as the murder of a Brahman'.[3]

It is dangerous to yawn, because either a Bhūt may go down your throat, or your soul, or part of it, may escape, and you will be hard set to recover it. Hence when a person yawns bystanders snap their thumbs and fingers in the hope of recalling his soul, or, as other explain, to scare any Bhūt who is preparing to enter the mouth of the yawner.[4] In some cases yawning indicates possession by some deity. When a Mikir woman becomes possessed she yawns continually and calls out the name and will of the gods.[5] A hiccup is caused by some friend or relation remembering you, and if you can identify the person, he or she is able to stop it.[6] Twitching of the right eye is lucky, of the left unlucky, both are the work of spirits, and careful rules are prescribed for interpreting the twitching of the lids and eyes.[7]

Bhūts also may enter the body through the feet or hands. At marriage the feet of the bridegroom and sometimes those of the bride are carefully washed by the parents of the former, because he or she may have brought some strange Bhūt or other pollution from outside. The parents of a Beldār bride in Poona, who have fasted since the morning, wash the feet of the pair and drink the water, with the intention of sharing their good luck or bringing their ill luck on themselves.[8] Drinking water in which the feet of holy men have been washed communicates their holiness to the drinker. In Bengal orthodox Hindus of the old school begin the day with a sip of water in which the toe of a Brahman has been dipped; this is known as Bipra charanamrita, 'Brahman's foot nectar', and followers of Vishnu

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 435. [2] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 273. [3] Ward, i. 142.
[4] *P. N. Q.* ii. 94: cf. *E. R. E.* xii. 829 f. [5] Stack, 35.
[6] *P. N. Q.* ii. 94. [7] *P. N. Q.* iii. 26; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 222.
[8] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 318.

drunk the water in which the feet of his image have been washed, but Siva, in spite of his euphemistic name, is a dangerous god, and no one dares to drink the water in which his Linga has been bathed.[1]

The ears are also an entry for Bhūts, and one explanation of the practice of ear-piercing is that it is done as a protection against the incoming of evil spirits.[2] Often it seems to be regarded as a form of initiation, and the question whether a child is to be cremated or not depends on whether it has undergone the rite of Kanchhedan or ear-piercing.[3] Among Mundas the ear-piercing marks the last stage of childhood, and in other castes a boy cannot be invested with the sacred cord until this is done, it being required that the hole should be large enough to allow the sun's rays to be visible through it.[4] Lhota Nāgas pierce the ear lobes of all infants after birth, and at the ceremony when heads are set up a boy has a hole pierced in the upper part of his helix.[5] Occasionally among Hindus the ears of boys are pierced with the object of producing a blot of imperfection, to assimilate them to girls who are less liable to the attacks of the Evil Eye or demons.[6] To allow the distended ear lobes to be broken is one of the most serious accidents which can befall a woman, sometimes involving expulsion from caste. Mr. Russell writes: 'The suggestion may be made as a speculation that the continuous distension of the lobe of the ear by women and the large hole produced are supposed to have some sympathetic effect in opening the womb and making child-birth more easy. The tearing of the ear might then be considered to render the woman incapable of bearing a child, and the penalties attached to it would be sufficiently explained.[7] One of the Gāro punish-

[1] Gait, *C. R.* i. 367 note; Stevenson, 385.
[2] Cf. Frazer, *F. L. O. T.* iii. 165 ff.
[3] Monier-Williams, 360, 376; Risley, *T. C.* i. 347: for the rite see Dubois, 159; O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 448; Matin-uz Zaman Khan, *C. R.* i. 144; Martin, *C. R.* i. 157.
[4] Sarat Chandra Roy, 459; Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 305; Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 179; Briggs, 70.
[5] Mills, 8.
[6] *Ind. Ant.* x. 332; *E. R. E.* vii. 324.
[7] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 530. It is a Munda custom that the bridegroom shoots an arrow through the space under the bride's arm-pit (Dalton, 195). Is it possible that Penelope's feat of shooting an arrow through the rings of twelve axes (Homer, *Odyssey*, xxi. 75 ff.) may be classed in the same category as a magical aid to coition?

ments for adultery is to tear away the ear-rings of the guilty woman, leaving two unsightly remnants of the lobes. But nowadays when the fidelity of a wife is impugned, her female relatives lay aside their ear-rings until the matter has been cleared up.[1]

[1] Playfair, 30.

VIII

THE CONCILIATION AND REPRESSION OF THE GHOST

It has been already stated[1] that among the peasantry the feeling of the survivors towards the family dead varies from affectionate respect to fear or detestation. Hence we find a variance of practice in the rites or observances which follow a death; some people have means to conciliate the spirit and recall it to its former home, while others endeavour to bar its return and take action intended to sever connexion with it.

The attempt to conciliate and recall the spirit is effected in various ways. As we have already seen,[2] its exit from the body is facilitated by the breaking of the skull, and by removing the dying man into the open air that it may without difficulty pass into the ether. Sometimes this journey of the spirit is aided by mechanical means. When Mangars of Bengal carry the corpse to the grave they strip it, dress it in new clothes, smear its forehead with sandalwood paste, lay silver coins and pieces of coral in its mouth, touch its lips with a wick soaked in ghi, apparently as a substitute for a lamp, and cover the face with a cloth. Then they set up two pieces of wood near the grave, in one of which nine notches or steps are cut, to form a ladder by which the spirit may ascend to heaven; on the other stick each mourner cuts a mark to show that he was present at the funeral. The maternal uncle, who acts as funeral priest, bids a solemn farewell to the dead man and calls on him to ascend to heaven by means of the ladder which stands ready for him.[3] Some Nāgas build little houses over the grave with ladders reaching up to them for the use of the ghost; others build thatched roofs over the grave, a custom which has been interpreted as a survival of the habit of exposing the dead to be devoured by wild animals.[4] Bhīls in Khāndesh on the twelfth and forty-fifth

[1] p. 184 above.
[2] p. 184 above.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 75.
[4] Mills, Introd. xxiv. 160.

day after a death send for a Kumhār or potter and employ him to erect a seven-stepped ladder against the wall of the house to help the ghost to ascend to heaven. Afterwards verses are chanted, the cord by which the ladder was fastened to the ground is burnt, the ladder itself is pulled down and thrown away, and on the spot where it was tied flour is sprinkled, on which a plate containing food, a jar of water, and a lighted lamp covered with a basket are laid.[1] Khāsis after depositing the bones in the tribal ossuary sacrifice a cock, and a small bamboo ladder with three rungs is set up to enable the spirit to climb into the tomb. When they carry the bones to the ossuary, if a stream must be crossed, they make a rough bridge of branches of trees and grass, and lay a train of leaves to guide the spirit to the cairn.[2] If the funeral party is compelled to cross a stream Kachāris stretch a cord from one bank to the other, thus forming a kind of bridge for the use of the spirit in case it should feel disposed to revisit the scenes of its life on earth.[3] Devices of this kind suggest the world-wide theory of the Bridge of Death over which the spirit must pass on its way to heaven.[4]

In some cases a ritual is performed to recall the kindly spirit to its former home. Kāmis in Bengal at the funeral feast lay out food for the dead on a leaf plate in the jungle, and watch till a fly or other insect settles on it. Then they cover it with a stone and are satisfied that the spirit has come and accepted the offering.[5] Khadāls in the Central Provinces during a burial or cremation beat the grass near the place with a mango twig and start a grasshopper; when they have captured it they wrap it in a piece of new cloth, bring it home, and place it near the image of their household deity. This rite they call 'bringing home the life of the soul', and they believe that it ensures its salvation.[6] Ahīrs in the same Province on the third day after a death catch a fish and take it home; the son of the deceased or some near relation picks up a stone, washes it in the water in which the fish was brought home, and then transfers the spirit to the stone which is enshrined in the

[1] *B. G.* xii. 92.
[2] Gurdon, 142.
[3] Endle: for similar devices see Lewin, 209 f.; Atkinson, iii. 121; Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 463; C. Sherring, *Mem. J. A. S. B.* i. 111.
[4] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. 94; *id.*, *Researches*, 349 ff.; Ja'far Sharīf, 214.
[5] Risley, *T. C.* i. 395.
[6] Russell, *T. C.* i. 376.

house as one of the family deities; Kamārs catch and bring home any living thing they can find after the funeral—a fish, a frog, a prawn, and so forth.[1] Dhākars at a funeral put a fish, the abode of the spirit, into a cup which the mourners touch and thus free it from the death impurity, and Khari[illegible] catch a fish on the third day after a death, which all the relations eat, the intention being that the spirit may not haunt them, or it has been interpreted as a survival of eating the dead, which may have been the original custom.[2] Another method of recalling the dead is practised by Orāons, who build a little hut of branches and straw near the grave, and after dark set fire to it; as it blazes a man strikes a ploughshare or a sickle, calls the dead man by name, and shouts, 'O so-and-so! Come quick! your house is burning!'[3] In the Central Provinces the Orāons perform a similar rite. If the corpse has been burnt they pick up the bones and place them in a pot, which is brought home and hung up beside the dead man's house. At night-time a relative sits inside the house watching a burning lamp, while some friends go outside the village and make a miniature hut with sticks and grass and set fire to it. They then call out to the dead man, 'Come, your house is being burnt!' and walk home striking a mattock and sickle together. On arriving at the house they kick down the matting which covers the doorway; the man inside says, 'Who are you?' and they answer, 'It is we.' They watch the lamp and when the flame wavers they believe it to show that the spirit of the deceased has followed them and has also entered the house.[4]

The funeral feast, even if the view that it is a survival of primitive cannibalism, the eating of the corpse by the relatives, fail to command general acceptance, is, particularly when it is held at the grave, a mode of communion with, and conciliation of, the spirits of the dead.[5] In Northern India it has been, to a great extent, merged in the Srāddha, but the feeding of the brotherhood after a death is part of the normal ritual. An early type of this is found among the Nāikdas, a forest tribe

[1] *Ibid.* ii. 28 f.; *Ind. Ant.* xxxii. 144.

[2] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 479, iii. 450: on eating the dead see *E. R. E.* iii. 199 f., xi. 575.

[3] Dehon, 135.

[4] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 309.

[5] Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, ii. 255 ff.; *E. R. E.* iii. 207, iv. 435 ff. v. 803 f.

in Bombay. He who sets light to the pyre cooks rice at his house, lays it on a platter made of leaves, pours a little ghi over it, and sets the whole on fire. He gives some of the food to the children of the tribe, and on the twelfth day, if he can afford it, he invites those who attended the funeral, or, if he is rich enough, the whole village, the guests coming when they please and eating their share on the spot, or taking it home.[1] The offering of hair, which has been interpreted to be a means of strengthening the spirits of the dead or of forming a bond of communion with them, is uncommon.[2] The mourner shaves, partly because it is a modification of the custom of self-mutilation after a death, or as a means of disguising himself and escaping the influence of the ghost, or as a means of ridding himself of pollution, or rather of the ghost which may be clinging to his hair. When the Lhota Nāga mother is well enough to take her child out of the house she cuts off a little of its hair, throws it away, or wraps it in cloth and keeps it, the removal of the hair ridding her of the birth pollution.[3] Rājis, a very primitive tribe in the lower Himalaya, shave the heads, beards, and moustaches of the near relations of the dead man, and throw the hair on the grave.[4] Among Panwārs in the Central Provinces, who claim to be Rājputs, the chief mourner keeps the bones, has his head and face shaved, and throws the hair-cuttings and most of the bones into water, reserving a few which he takes, when convenient, to the Narbada.[5] The throwing of the hair into a river brings the dead man into communion, not with an anthropomorphic god, but with the spirit of the river. In the Deccan the hair of a Chitpāvan Brahman widow is cut off, wrapped in her bodice, and laid on the bier of her late husband, and the sons of a Banjāra, at the cremation of their father, cut off some of their head and face hair and throw it on his pyre, but the general rule is that the widow breaks her bangles on the day of her husband's death and has her head shaved on the tenth day.[6] After the cremation of a Bhīl a fire is lighted outside the house, some hair of a woman is put into it, each of the party

[1] *B. G.* iii. 225.

[2] Frazer, *F. L. O. T.* iii. 297 f.; *id.*, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 31, 102; *E. R. E.* iv. 431, vi. 476 f.; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 276 f.

[3] Mills, 147.

[4] Crooke, *T. C.* iv. 213.

[5] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 348.

[6] *B. G.* ix, part i, 50, xii. 91, xviii. part i, 149.

drops some Nīm leaves into the fire and purifies himself by passing his hands through the smoke and rubbing them over his face.[1] A child's first hair is often dedicated by Musalmāns at some saint's tomb.[2] Chibh Rājputs in the Panjab offer the scalp-locks of their male children at the tomb of the martyr, Sur Sadi, and the child is not regarded as a true Chibh until this rite is done, nor is his mother allowed to eat meat.[3]

The return of the spirit is indicated by the marks of its foot-prints. Hos lay out boiled rice for the spirit and sprinkle ashes on the floor, in order that should the spirit come its footmarks may be detected. If there is the faintest sign that the ashes and rice have been disturbed, 'they sit down shivering with horror and crying bitterly, as if by no means pleased with the visit, though made at their earnest solicitation'.[4] Patlia Bhīls bring ashes from the hearth of the dead man, sift them on the spot where he died, laying near the place a lamp with three dishes of food, milk, and water, and inverting a basket over the offering. On the morning of the second day the basket is removed, and the ashes are carefully examined to see if the spirit has returned and eaten of the fare provided. The ashes are then removed, thrown away, and the spot is smeared with cow-dung.[5] A Chamār widow, after the funeral feast, sifts ashes from the hearth over a small space in the room which she covers with a sieve. Two plates of food are laid close by, and in the morning the ashes are examined to detect footprints; if no mark is found it is assumed that the round of transmigration for the deceased has been finished, or that his spirit has been 'laid'.[6]

Sometimes an official, priest, exorcist, sorcerer, is employed to recall the spirit. In the Central Provinces this is the duty of the Bhagat, one who has communion with the dead. The son of the deceased sits before him holding a bowl of milk, drums are beaten, and invocations sung till the spirit descends on the Bhagat and drives him to and fro through the house, his movements being closely followed by the son who carries the bowl of milk. At the shout, 'He has come!' they look into the bowl and find something like a grain of rice in the milk. This is taken

[1] Luard, *Eth. Sur.*, art. 'Bhīl', p. 3.
[2] Ja'far Sharif, 8, 135. [3] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 169. [4] Dalton, 204 f.
[5] Luard, *Eth. Surv.*, art. 'Bhīl', p. 51. [6] Briggs, 111.

out, touched with vermilion, put inside a ball of flour, and laid beside the images of the household deities. Then the spirits of the ancestors are called, on which an extraordinary scene follows. The Bhagat, possessed by the spirit, goes round, inspects the store-houses and cattle, and surveys the shape of the household. He visits the women and the spirits renew their relations with them, while they weep and greet the visitors who have come after a long parting. This weird scene lasts till the spirits leave the Bhagat and he comes to his senses.[1] The home-coming of the spirit is thus closely connected with the provision of food for its use.[2]

Provision is also made for the wants of the dead by burying or burning with the dead certain implements or other articles which the spirit may need in the other world, but this motive is often supplemented by the feeling that it is unlucky for the survivors to use them. It is denied that the custom is connected with the resurrection of the body or the reincarnation of the soul, or that the dead could derive benefit from such gifts. They are unwilling, they say, to derive any benefit from the death of a relative, and so they commit to the flames the dead man's personal effects—clothing, vessels, weapons, and money in his possession—but this does not apply to his belongings which have never been used.[3] This exception is not made by other tribes or castes which bury or burn articles with the dead. Chamārs on the tenth day after a death lay out for a dead woman a clay pipe, if she was a smoker, a broom, a small pot of oil, and the two vessels used in cooking the food on the first and ninth day of mourning; in the case of a man the broom is omitted and replaced by a cover for one of the cooking pots.[4] Nāgas place in the grave only articles of trifling value, enough to enable the dead man to make a fresh start—a spear or two, sometimes an umbrella, never his gun or cornelian necklace.[5] Lhota Nāgas lay on a man's grave a gourd of beer and a little boiled rice, and six pieces of meat are hung on the head-post. His wooden dao- or knife-holder, bear's hair wig, sheet, long loin-cloth, and other like things are hung on the cross-bar, and

[1] Begbie-Nelson, i. 133; Nelson, *Bilaspur Gaz.* i. 106 f.
[2] Cf. *E.R.E.* vi. 65 ff.
[3] Dalton, 205.
[4] Briggs, 111.
[5] Hodson, *Nagas*, 100.

his spears are stuck upright on the grave.[1] Before the cremation Khāsis shoot two arrows, one to the east and the other to the west, to protect the spirit on its journey to the other world, and they sacrifice a cock which will show him the road and wake him at dawn to pursue his march.[2] Chakmas in Bengal bury with the corpse a bamboo post or some other part of the dead man's house, probably in order to provide him with shelter in Deathland, and Majhwārs in the United Provinces place with the corpse of a man a bludgeon, an earthen pot, and sometimes an axe; for a woman a spud used in digging roots, a stick, and the stand on which the house water-pots are kept.[3] There seems to be little or no evidence to show that, as in other parts of the world, articles dedicated in this way are intentionally broken, 'to take the life out of them', and thus adapt them for the use of the spirit.

The spirit also needs a light to guide it on its way and fire to warm itself. In Bihār on the first day after a death a lamp is placed on the spot where the death occurred, on the second a little way off, and so gradually on the tenth day it is put where the articles for the purification of the mourners are collected.[4] In Bombay when a sweeper is buried in the seated posture, a lighted lamp is put before the corpse; Bāri mourners sprinkle leaves of the Nīm tree (*Azadirachta indica*), used in purification, round the lamp; Dheds bury the corpse and put a lamp near the grave.[5] In the Panjab it is believed that if a man dies so suddenly that a lamp cannot be lighted before his death he will become an evil spirit, and in order to prevent this danger the chief mourner must go to the Ganges and perform a special rite known as Nārāyanbali, in which images of the five great gods are placed in five copper water-pots and worshipped with special Mantras to appease the ancestral spirits.[6] Chamārs light a small fire at the grave or pyre to warm the spirit, and feed it with ghi and rice, saying, 'In whatever state you may be, leave us alone!'[7] Dumāls in the Central Provinces make a fire over the grave and cover it with an empty pot; Lhota

[1] Mills, 158.
[2] Gait, *C. R. Assam*, i. 261.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* i. 174; Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 433.
[4] Grierson, 393.
[5] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 63, 112, 327.
[6] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 869; Stevenson, 125.
[7] Briggs, 106.

Nāgas keep the grave-fire alight until the dead man is supposed to have departed to the Land of the Dead.[1]

The spirit does not attain its final rest until an abode is provided for it during the period which elapses during its journey to the realm of Yama. Lower castes in the plains after cremation or burial fix a reed in the sand on the river-bank where the final rites are performed, and in it the spirit finds a refuge, the reed being thrown into the water after its departure has been arranged. In Bombay and the Deccan, at the place where the corpse was laid down the chief mourner picks up a stone, known as Asma, 'stone', Jīvkhada, 'spirit pebble', or Pretyasila, 'stone of the Pret or disembodied spirit'. Holding this stone as he walks round the pyre he pierces a water-jar and provides a libation for the thirsty spirit. The stone is then anointed with oil, worshipped, and when a crow, the bird of death, has, as representing the spirit, been induced to eat corn sprinkled near the stone, it is thrown into running water, or it is kept in the house during the period of mourning, or installed among the household deities.[2] Guraos in the Central Provinces pick up a stone on the road when the corpse-bearers change places and bury it in the cremation ground until the mourners on the tenth day are purified by the priest, when it is dug up, worshipped, and finally thrown into a well.[3]

Rites of this kind develop into the erection of memorial stones, pillars, or, finally, of images of the dead. Such memorial stones are erected by tribes like Nāgas, Mundas, or Gāros. Nāgas erect them for a father in the hope that he will help his son in time of need, and they are thus connected with the luck and permanence of the family, while among Lhota Nāgas they are closely associated with terraced cultivation, and the stones are sometimes replaced by wooden or Y-shaped posts, or they are carved in phallic form and erected after a special rite.[4] Those erected by Khāsis form an important series, and an analogy has been suggested between them and those of the Mundas.[5] Nāgas in Manipur show a stone through which the

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 535; Mills, 159.
[2] *B. G.* xviii, part i. 191; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 187.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 180.
[4] Hodson, *Nagas*, 138; Mills, Introd. xxix f., 142 f., 144 note 1.
[5] Gurdon, 144 ff.; Dalton, 203 f.; Sarat Chandra Roy, 466.

common ancestor emerged from the earth, and they erect stones in rows, avenues, circles, or ovals, consisting of monoliths, cairns, single small stones, and flat slabs resting on supports.[1] Bhīls erect in the Devasthān or 'god-yard' to the memory of a leading man a stone carved with a human figure on horseback.[2] In the Panjab hills stones or boards, called Pīrs, 'ancestor', are common, as well as monoliths carved with a rude figure of the deceased.[3] The Gond stones have a seat in front on which the ghost may rest, the memorial stone being its permanent home.[4]

With the provision of a temporary home of the spirit we may compare the cycle of beliefs known as the Life Index, 'the belief that living people may deposit their souls for safe keeping outside of themselves in some secure place, where the precious deposit will be less exposed to the risks and vicissitudes of life than when it remained in the body of its owner'.[5] In the folk-tales it appears as a bird, an insect, a plant, a necklace, or in other objects, where it gives an omen or indicates danger—milk which turns red when a relative is in danger; a sword which becomes heated when the hero is in danger, when the handle rivet comes out his head falls off, and when it is reburnished he lives again, and so on.[6] In Bengal Hindu prostitutes are married to a jasmine or rose tree, Musalmāns to a sword or knife; the plant is watered and the sword kept in a box, in the belief that if one or the other dies or is lost the girl becomes a widow.[7]

The spirit while the corpse is being taken to the grave is exposed to danger from the evil spirits which beset it. The loud music at a low-caste funeral, as well as the keening prompted by natural affection and emotion, are also efficacious in scaring these hostile spirits. In addition to this a little food is scattered on the road as the funeral passes, and with the object of evading them it is customary when the bier is halted for a change of bearers to throw small copper coins on the roadside.[8]

[1] Hodson, 13, 186 ff.
[2] Mead–Macgregor, *C. R.* i. 238.
[3] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 195 ff.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 63.
[5] Frazer, *Totemism*, v. 52 ff.; *id.*, *G. B.* 'Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', ii. 290 f.; *E. R. E.* viii. 44 ff.
[6] Temple–Steel, 404 f.: Hartland, *L. P.* ii. 285 ff.; *E. R. E.* iii. 207, iv. 435 ff., v. 803 f.
[7] O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 324 f.
[8] *B. G.* xvii. 180; Thurston, *T. C.* i. 301.

Many of the rites performed after death are, however, intended to prevent the return of the spirit, and even rites of tendance, as in the Chamār case quoted above, are done with a hint to the spirit that as it has now been duly supplied with food, light, or fire, it is expected to show its gratitude by not troubling the donors. Binjwārs light a lamp and place uncooked food on the grave; when an insect flies to the lamp they catch it, place it in a cake of flour, carry it to a river-bank, worship it with an offering of coloured rice, and then thrust it into the mud with a grass broom, indicating that as they have done their duty to the spirit they do not wish to have any further relations with it.[1] Bhotias in Garhwāl fasten to the front of the bier a white cloth, of cotton for a man, woollen for a woman, which is carried by the female mourners, and is known as the 'way-cloth', because it is intended to guide the spirit on its way and so get rid of it.[2]

One way of barring the return of the ghost is to remove the corpse from the house by a special way or door, not generally used by inmates, and to close it after the funeral has started, so that the spirit may not be able to find its way back. This end is also attained by prohibiting the removal of the corpse by any but a single gate of the town or village, generally that facing south which leads it straight to the realm of Yama, but the primitive ritual ordained that the corpse of a Sūdra should be taken out by the southern gate, by the western if a Brahman, by the northern if a Kshatriya, and by the eastern if a Vaisya.[3] Meitheis never remove the corpse from the house over the threshold of the main door, but cut a hole in the wall or use the tiny side entrance.[4] Maghs in Bengal, when the house-master has died, throw down the ladder leading up to the house, and the mourners on their return must effect an entrance by creeping through a hole in the back wall.[5] The same precautions are used by Musalmāns. When a death occurs in one of the palaces of the Nawāb of Bahāwalpur the body is carried out through a hole in the wall; at Maler Kotla it used to be forbidden to bring a body into the town without special permission, and then not

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 334.
[2] C. Sherring, *Mem. A. S. B.* i. 109.
[3] Stevenson, *Rites*, 149; Colebrooke, 98.
[4] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 117.
[5] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 34.

by one of the gates, but through a hole broken in the town wall.[1] It is a remarkable fact that the corpses of the Emperors Akbar and Shāh Jahān were removed from the palace by a special way.[2] With the intention of facilitating the departure of the ghost the feet of the dying and the dead are turned in the direction of the house entrance, and with the object of baffling the ghost it is usual to carry the corpse feet foremost to burial or cremation, and on the way the bearers halt and reverse the position.[3] Fear of the dead suggests that the eyes of the corpse should be closed, but it is also a method of baffling the ghost. Dāngris in the Central Provinces cover the eyes and ears of the dead with cotton leaves, and they explain that this is specially done in the case of a person possessed by an evil spirit, probably to prevent the exit of it from the body, which may cause danger to the survivors.[4] Sometimes the return of the ghost in company with the mourners is prevented by physical means. It was the ancient rule that when the mourners left the cremation ground the officiating priest raised a barrier of stones between the dead and the living.[5] It is still the custom among some castes for the mourners as they leave the pyre or grave to throw pebbles in that direction to bar the ghost.[6] Bhīl mourners on their return halt half-way between the pyre and the dead man's house, place five stones close together, and hang a bit of the shroud on a neighbouring tree; in the lower Himalaya this is interpreted as a propitiatory offering to the spirits which frequent the burning-ground.[7] In connexion with the shroud it may be noted that when the corpse of a Tiyan in Madras is being removed the eldest son, who is chief mourner, tears crosswise a piece of the cloth which has been placed over the corpse by the people of the house, and ties it round his forehead; he holds one end of the cloth while the barber holds the other and tears off the piece; the barber then cuts three holes in the remainder of the shroud, over the mouth, navel, and pubes, a little water and rice being then poured over a gold fanam coin

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 869.

[2] Smith, *Akbar*, 327: Manucci, ii. 126, 431. On the door for the dead see Frazer, *The Belief in Immortality*, i. 452 f.

[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 48; Stevenson, 149.

[4] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 465.

[5] Rajendralala Mitra, ii. 123, 146.

[6] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 287.

[7] *B. G.* ix, part i, 309; Atkinson, ii. 832.

through the slot over the mouth. The object of the custom is not explained; possibly the heir procures communion with the dead by wearing part of the shroud and through the hole over the dead man's mouth, the other hole being intended to give exit for the ghost.[1] When Mangar mourners in Bengal return, one of the party makes a barricade of thorns mid-way between the grave and the house of the deceased. On the top of the thorns he places a large stone, and standing on it holds a pot of burning incense in his left hand and some woollen thread in his right. One by one the mourners pass through the smoke of the burning incense, and each takes a piece of the thread and ties it round his neck, thus barring the ghost.[2] Vārlis in Bombay effect severance from the dead by throwing away the old clothes of the deceased as his corpse is being removed.[3] Bhotias select a scape-animal to represent the deceased, and at the final rite for getting rid of the spirit the clothes are taken off a dummy figure of the dead man and put on the scape-animal, which is beaten and driven away, never to return; in some places it is allowed to roam free on the mountains, but elsewhere low-caste Bhotias and Tibetans kill it and eat the meat.[4]

The ghost is prevented from walking by tying together the great toes or thumbs of the corpse. It is the rule among Brahmans in Gujarāt; some Gāros tie the hands behind the back and bind the great toes together; Kurmis bind the thumbs and toes.[5] If a Chamār happens to die late in the afternoon and the funeral cannot take place till next day, they bind the big toes together to prevent the body from suddenly increasing in length, or they measure a reed exactly the length of the corpse and lay it close by, for if this precaution is not taken Baitāl or Vetāl, prince of demons, may get possession of it and cause it to swell.[6] Angāmi Nāgas adopt another method of preventing the ghost from 'walking': if a girl gave birth to an illegitimate child it was the custom to kill it, and the soles of its feet were pierced with thorns to prevent it from returning and harming the mother in her dreams.[7] When a Koyi girl died from syphilis, a basket fish-trap containing grass

[1] Thurston, vii. 84.
[2] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 75 f.
[3] Enthoven, *T. C.* iii. 452.
[4] C. Sherring, *Mem. J. S. B.* i. 113 ff.
[5] Stevenson, *Rites*, 147; Playfair, 106; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 79.
[6] Briggs, 100 f.
[7] Hutton, *Angami*, 171.

with thorny twigs on each side was placed after the cremation to catch the malign spirit and prevent it from entering the village, the trap and twigs holding the captured spirit being burnt next day.[1] Pābias in the Central Provinces after a funeral go into another room, having first hung a net over the entrance to that in which the death occurred, believing that the ghost will thus be captured and prevented from giving trouble.[2] The practice of burying certain corpses face downwards with the same intention has been already noticed.[3]

Sight being a form of sense-contact it is dangerous to be seen by certain persons or to look at certain persons or things.[4] The risk of looking back appears in the Indian folk-tales, one of the penalties of a breach of this taboo being that the rash person who looks back is turned into a pillar of stone.[5] It is particularly dangerous at a funeral to look back towards the place of burial or cremation, lest the souls of the mourners may be detained by those of the dead. When Khāsis are collecting the bones of the dead for reinternment, if any bone has been forgotten no one dares go back to pick it up; the bone-carrier must not turn round or look to his right or left, but must go straight to the cairn.[6]

As we have already seen, the ghost may cling to the mourners after their return from the funeral. Hence they need purification which is usually effected by bathing and a change of clothes, or when they reach the house door they touch a stone, cow-dung, iron, fire, and water, each man rubs his left ear with the little finger of his left hand, chews leaves of the bitter Nīm tree (*Azadirachta indica*), and passes his feet through the smoke of burning oil, or rubs oil on them. Corpse-bearers, who are specially polluted, have their shoulders rubbed with oil, the 'pollution' in these cases being the clinging ghost. The Nasesālār or Parsis corpse-bearers are purified with cow's urine and water, and though after purification they may mix freely with other members of the community, at public dinners they are seated apart from the other guests.[7] In the case of a death by accident among Lhota Nāgas the friends of the dead man build a little shed and put some clothes and food in it. On

[1] Thurston, *T. C.* iv. 55.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* i. 395.
[3] p. 130 above.
[4] Cf. Crawley, 115.
[5] J. H. Knowles, 401; *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 10, v. 185.
[6] Gurdon, 134.
[7] *B. G.* ix, part ii, 239 note.

the day after the death an old man lights a fire in front of the house and sacrifices a cock. All the members of the family come out of the house stark naked and, after stepping over the fire, enter the shed, where they remain six days without speaking to any one, their food being provided by friends. A new house is then built for them.[1]

[1] Mills, 262.

IX

FERTILITY AND AGRICULTURAL RITES

Many of the rites performed by the peasantry are done with the intention of promoting the fertility of human beings, domestic animals, and crops.

The necessity which compels the Hindu to desire male offspring is the belief that a son must be born to him capable of performing the obsequial rites on which his happiness in Deathland depends. 'Through a son he conquers the worlds, through a son's son he obtains immortality, but through his son's grandson he gains the world of the Sun.'[1] The same feeling, in a less degree, prevails among the lower classes of Indo-Musalmāns, who are mainly converts from Hinduism.[2] The Hindu lawgiver, in defiance of philology, reinforces his doctrine by the assertion that the word *putra*, 'son', means 'he who delivers his father from the Hell called Put'.

The orthodox method of obtaining male issue is to worship the family deity, Vishnu, Siva, or one of the Mother goddesses, and to observe fasts on the days sacred to them. Siva is generally worshipped with this intent, and though a learned Hindu writer assures us that the cult of Siva among Hindu women is not based on phallism, this may be taken to refer only to the more intelligent classes, while among people of the lower culture the phallic conception of the Linga is unmistakable.[3] The cults of Vishnu in the form of Krishna and of the Mother goddess, particularly in the Sakti Vāmamārgi, or 'left-hand' development, are erotic, and in order to promote fertility communion with them is secured by visiting their shrines, making small offerings to them, and in a magical way by hanging up little cradles in the hope that there may be boy babies to fill them. The peasant woman relies on a prayer to some Sati to obtain the boon.

[1] Manu, *Laws*, ix. 137–8.
[2] Ja'far Sharīf, 17.
[3] Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 235: see *E. R. E.* ix. 815; Hopkins, 414.

In former times human sacrifices were offered with this object, and though this is rigidly prohibited by British law, it is possible that it may still be done in secret or in the more isolated parts of the Empire. It survives in the belief that human blood is efficacious in removing sterility or strengthening a weakly child. In 1870 a case was officially reported in which a Musalmān butcher was advised by a Hindu sorcerer to bathe his wife in human blood to ensure that her future children would be healthy, and of a child being killed and its blood drunk by a sterile woman.[1] A woman in the Muzaffarnagar District, United Provinces, under instructions from a Syāna or 'cunning man' of the Chamār currier caste, killed a Brahman child with horrible tortures and bathed in water mixed with its blood.[2]

Water, as we have already seen,[3] is the prime giver of fertility, and bathing is often prescribed as a cure for barrenness. In the Panjab women bathe at a crematorium over a burning pyre and thus absorb the spirit of the dead, or they bathe at the junction of cross-roads and streets, or arrange that after bathing their shadows may fall on a boy.[4] With the same intention the married pair, or one of them, are doused with water. Koi Gonds pour water on the head of the bridegroom and let it drop on to that of the bride, and in the lower Himalaya the bride places her hand in that of her father, the groom holds her thumb, while the mother of the girl pours water on the three hands while a prayer of dedication is offered.[5] The rite is apparently in part a fertility charm, and partly to be a formal giving-away of the girl. A hot spring, supposed to be the place where a demon was slain or where he sank into the earth, is visited by sterile women who scramble for betel-nuts thrown into the mud by the priests, and it is believed that she who finds one will soon have her desire for children realized.[6] Kandhs employ a priest to take a childless woman to the confluence of two streams, where he sprinkles water over her and makes an offering to the godling of births.[7] In the Panjab, on a Sunday or Tuesday night, or during the Dīvāli or Feast of Lights,

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 205 f.
[2] *Ibid.* i. 150, iii. 72; Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 235.
[3] p. 54 above.
[4] Harikishan Kaul, *loc. cit.*
[5] *J. R. A. S.* xiii. 430; Atkinson, ii. 909: cf. Stevenson, 83 f.
[6] Ball, 531.
[7] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 47.

a barren woman sits on a stool which is lowered into a well. She strips off her clothes, bathes, dresses, and is drawn up, when she performs the Chaukpūrna rite of filling up with offerings a square drawn on the ground while she recites incantations taught to her by a wizard. Should it be impossible for her to descend into the well the rite is done under a Pīpal tree (*Ficus religiosa*), and it is believed that after this ceremony the well and the tree lose their vitality, which is then transferred to the woman, the one drying up, the other withering.[1] Bathing naked in water drawn from five wells, at a place where four roads meet, or on a piece of ground covered with the leaves of the five 'royal' or sacred trees, on which is laid a bead representing the hero Rāma, is another remedy prescribed in the Panjab, and in the Central Provinces a Jāt woman who is barren is taken to the meeting-place of three village boundaries and bathed there.[2]

Sympathetic magic by touching is also employed for this purpose. A barren Kāchhi woman in the United Provinces tries to cut off the hair of a child who is a member of a large family, or a shred from the mother's sheet.[3] In the Central Provinces a Korku woman tries to obtain the hair of a mother of a large family, and she buries it under her bathing-stone in the hope that the quality of fertility may be transferred to her from the owner of the hair, and Kurmi women believe that if a midwife dips her toe in the blood of a woman at child-birth, washes it off, and gives it to a barren woman to drink, it will have the same effect.[4]

The same result is attained by gaining communion with a holy man or with the spirit which pervades a sacred place. At the funeral of a member of the Dhundia sect of Jains in Gujarāt women who desire the blessing of a male child creep beneath the litter on which the corpse is being carried, or scramble for fragments of his clothing.[5] In the Panjab a woman cursed with barrenness, which here as elsewhere is attributed to the machinations of an evil spirit, goes to one of two sacred places, and after certain rites creeps through an artificial orifice in

[1] Rose, *G. R.* i. 164. [2] *P. N. Q.* iv. 88; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 235.
[3] Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 82; *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 215.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 197, 563, iv. 70. [5] Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 611.

a stone which is just large enough to admit an adult, and then bathes, leaving at the place one of her garments as a sign that she has got rid of the evil influence; or she bathes near the nine-yard-long tomb of a Musalmān saint.[1] As the jasmine and rose bushes growing at a saint's tomb produce fertility, a woman bathes, purifies herself, goes to the shrine and seats herself under or near one of these trees with her skirt spread out, and as many flowers fall into her lap, so many children will she bear.[2]

It is generally believed that if a barren woman succeed in burning down seven thatched huts she can secure offspring. The basis of the belief is obscure, but the apparent object is to purify her from the evil influences which impede fertility.[3]

Besides those which have been already mentioned many marriage rites are performed with the same intention. Vedic ritual prescribed that the bride should sit on the hide of a red bull, laid with its neck towards the east, and the hairy side upwards, the fertility of the animal being communicated to the woman.[4] The Vedic rites of Garbhadhāna, or promotion of conception, or Pumsavana, or causing a male child to be born, in which the husband used to pour a few drops of water in which bent grass was infused down his wife's right nostril, are now seldom performed though they are still included in the orthodox ritual.[5] It was an ancient practice, still generally observed, to make a boy sit in the bride's lap.[6] In the Deccan it is usual for the couple to take a mat to a river or tank, dip it in the water, and catch some minnows, most fertile creatures, kiss them, and release them.[7] The married pair of a Kanara Brahman family go to a pond, throw rice into the water, and catch fish with a cloth; they set all of them loose except one, with the scales of which they mark their brows; if they fail to catch a fish, they make one of white flour and use it in the same way.[8] Another plan is to transplant the Ākāsbel, a

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 209. [2] Russell, *T. C.* i. 253.
[3] Crooke, 'Hut-burning in the Ritual of India', *Man*, xix. 18 ff.
[4] Colebrooke, 139: cf. Hartland, *L. P.* i. 124 note.
[5] Stevenson, *Rites*, 108; Monier-Williams, 354 f.; *B. G.* ix, part i, 31 note.
[6] *S. B. E.* xxix. 42, xxx. 50, 263.
[7] Thurston, *T. C.* ii. 330, iv. 57: cf. Gubernatus, i. 249 f.
[8] B. G. xv, part i, 126.

destructive parasitical creeper, which multiplies rapidly, from one tree to another, or they procure a coco-nut or some other fruit, or a barleycorn from some shrine, believing that it conveys fertility to the woman who eats them.[1]

Others, again, make the married pair perform an imitation of some agricultural process; they join in dragging a plough, or sow seeds, or, as is common among the Assam hill tribes, pretend to hoe a rice-field.[2]

One of the most common fertility charms is to fill the bride's lap with fruit or vegetables.[3] With the same and probably a phallic intention the potter's wheel is worshipped, the pair work the pestle used for husking rice, or it is shown to the bridegroom.[4] Prabhu clerks in the Deccan make the bride pass a grindstone to her husband, saying, 'Take the baby, I am going to cook,' and he returns it, saying, 'Take the baby, I am going to office.'[5]

At both Hindu and Musalmān marriages the anointing of bride and bridegroom is an important ceremony.[6] Among Brahmans in the Deccan the boy's father and mother are anointed with a mixture of oil and turmeric by five married women whose fathers- and mothers-in-law are alive and who are themselves mothers of boys; the pair are anointed in the same way.[7] It is a general custom that some of the condiment rubbed on the bride is sent to the bridegroom, and vice versa, the object being to produce communion between the pair. Barren women and widows are often excluded from this rite. The custom seems to be based on more than one principle. The oil is the surrogate of the animal fat used for this purpose in the lower culture; turmeric is a 'sacred' plant, its colour suggesting ripe grain. One object is thus to fertilize bride and bridegroom, another to protect him from malignant spirits,[8] and both forms of magic have the same meaning.

[1] Cf. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity*, i. 33 ff.
[2] Thurston, *T. C.* iii. 103, vi. 20, vii. 193; Gait, *C. R.* Assam, i. 239; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 109.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 34, iii. 5, iv. 61; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 185.
[4] *B. G.* ix, part i, 120; Thurston, *T. C.* iii. 420.
[5] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 216.
[6] Ja'far Sharīf, 66 f.
[7] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 124 f., 198 f.; Stevenson, 79.
[8] See Westermarck, *Hist. H. M.* i. 511 f.; Robertson-Smith, *Rel. Semites*, 382 ff.

The marriage of girls to a god may be discussed in this connexion. In old days in the Panjab a Dhīmar or water-carrier girl used to be married to Bhairon, an old Earth godling, at his shrine at Baodada in Rewāri, but it is said that she always died soon after, and the practice has now been discontinued.[1] The Bharbhunjar or grain-parchers in the Gurgaon District of the same Province worship Bhairon, to whom the Mallāh boatmen of Agra used to marry their daughters. It is said that the godling once saved a sinking boat, and ever after the family which owned it used to marry one of their girls to him, leaving her at his shrine where she survived for less than a year; but now only a doll made of dough is formally wedded.[2] In the Central Provinces a Jain bride was, it is said, locked up in a temple, and was considered to be the bride of the Tīrthankara or saint to whom the temple was dedicated, but now she is locked up there only for a minute or two, and is then released.[3] The legend of the great temple at Bhīnmāl in the Jodhpur State, Rajputana, dedicated to Vishnu, tells that Bhrigu the sage had a daughter named Lakshmi whom Nārada, the Rishi, insisted should be married to Vishnu as a representative of Lakshmi, his divine consort, which resembles the tale current in Southern India that an image of Krishna plundered by the Musalmāns from a Hindu temple shared the bed of one of the princesses of Delhi, and that she finally became absorbed into the image.[4] A similar tale of absorption into a god is told of the Rājput poetess, Mīrā Māi, who in her ecstatic devotion believed herself to be wedded to Krishna. She used to play draughts with his image, and on one occasion it is said to have actually extended its arm to move a piece.[5] In the same way the Linga at Nagardhan is said to have opened to receive a pious woman who was unjustly accused of infidelity by her husband.[6] In Bihār during the rainy season, probably as a rain charm, crowds of women who for the time call themselves Nāgin, or wives of the snake godling, go round begging for two and a half days, during which time they

[1] Maclagan, *C. R.* i. 108; Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 142; Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 288.

[2] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 87.

[3] Russell, *T. C.* i. 226.

[4] *B. G.* i, part i, 461 f.; F. Buchanan, *Mysore*, ii. 70 f.

[5] *Ind. Ant.* xxxii. 332, 335; Tod, i. 337 f.

[6] Russell, *Nāgpur Gaz.* i. 307 f.

neither sleep under a roof nor eat salt. Half the proceeds of the begging are given to Brahmans, and the remainder is used to purchase salt and sweetmeats, which are eaten by all the people of the village.[1] This tradition extends even to the tombs of Musalmān saints. It is said that a girl is annually married at the shrine of Lāl Shāhbāz of Sind, and, in addition to the case of Ghāzi Miyan, noticed already,[2] another Musalmān worthy, Badru-d-din, is honoured by a 'sacred' marriage every year, when copious libations of sherbet are made at his shrine.[3]

'Sacred' marriages of deities are charms to promote vegetation and general fertility,[4] and the stories quoted above indicate that this form of charm was common in ancient times. It now survives in the form of the preliminary marriage of dancing-girls or prostitutes at a temple where, under the title of Devadāsi, 'slaves of the deity', they cohabit both with the priests and with visitors.[5] This custom, infrequent in Northern India, is common in the Deccan and Madras. In parts of Bombay such girls, known as Bhāvin, 'beautiful wantons', Devli, 'attached to the gods', or Nāikin, 'one of a gang of prostitutes', are ostensively married at the temple to the dagger and masks of the god, and differ only by this dedication from ordinary harlots.[6] In Kanara girls, known as Kalavant, 'accomplished', are married to the god represented by one of the regular temple dancing-girls, who carries a dagger, the emblem of Subramanya or Kārttikeya, god of war.[7] This practice is common in Madras, where it is provided with an aetiological legend to explain cousin marriage under the law of Mother Right.[8] In Saharanpur, United Provinces, there is a good example of one of these mock marriages. At the Tīj festival held on the 3rd of the bright fortnight of Sāvan (July–August), in the rainy season, girls dressed in their best clothes go to a tank, make offerings to the water saint, Khwāja Khizr, and then divide into two parties, the leaders of which are known respectively as bride and bridegroom, the latter wearing the usual marriage crown. The clothes of the pair are knotted together, and they are made to walk round the sacred Tulasi plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) or

[1] Grierson, 404 f.
[2] p. 166 above.
[3] Oliver, 69.
[4] Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', ii. 120 ff.
[5] *Id., loc. cit.* ii. 149 f.
[6] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 145 ff.
[7] *B. G.* xv, part i, 323 f.
[8] Thurston, *T. C.* iii. 317, vi. 10 ff.

a Pīpal tree (*Ficus religiosa*), each party chaffing the other, saying, 'Your bride (or bridegroom) is one-eyed.' When they return home the knot is untied. The rite is one intended to produce fertility and a good fall of rain.[1]

Deities which promote fertility, both male and female, must, on this principle, be provided with consorts. In the Bijapur District the annual marriage of Sangamesvar, 'Lord of the sacred river junction', a title of Siva, is performed with Pārvati, spouse of Siva, whose image stands in another part of the temple. The village accountant, a Brahman, officiates as bridegroom, and the headman, a Lingāyat, represents the bride. The ceremony lasts from four days, and on the fifth the deity is carried in procession on a car.[2] The marriage of Siva and Pārvati is a favourite subject in Indian sculpture, a notable example being that in the cave at Elephanta.[3] A similar rite is performed at Udaipur in Rajputana, where images of Siva and his consort, best known under the title of Gauri, 'the reddish-yellowish one', the colour of ripe wheat, are placed together, and a 'Garden of Adonis' is grown. The goddess here takes precedence of her consort, and she is ceremonially bathed in the lake in order to purify her from the pollution incurred during the preceding year and to fit her for her future fertilizing task.[4] The origin of rites of this class may be traced to tribes of the lower culture, like the Kharwārs of Chota Nāgpur. Their tribal goddess, Mūchak Rāni, is by caste a Chamārin or leather-dresser, and her worshippers offer pigs and chickens to her at more than one festival, and once a year cakes and kids on the village threshing-floor. Every third year she is married with much pomp. Early in the morning men and women go to her shrine on the summit of a hill, singing a wild song in honour of bride and bridegroom. One of the party, acting for the occasion as priest, ascends the hill in front of the procession, shouting and dancing until he works himself into a state of frenzy. The procession halts at the entrance of a cave at the summit of the hill which the priest enters and brings out the Rāni in the form of a small, oblong pebble daubed over with red vermilion.

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 133. [2] *B. G.* xxiii. 676.
[3] Smith, *H. F. A.* 215, with a photograph; *E. R. E.* v. 262, vi. 701.
[4] Tod, ii. 666 ff.

After he goes through some antics a piece of tasar silk cloth is tied on the Rāni's head, and she is lifted on a new sheet which is tied to a bamboo in the shape of a wedding litter. The procession conveying her halts at the foot of the hill until noon, whence it starts for the home of the bridegroom who abides on an adjoining hill. Here offerings of sweetened milk, two copper coins, and two bell-metal bracelets are given to the bride, and she is taken out of her litter and put into the cave where her consort, said to be an Agariya or iron-smelter, resides. The cave is supposed to be of enormous depth, for the stone falls rolling down, striking the rocks on its way, and all present eagerly listen till the sound ceases, which they say does not happen for about half an hour. Then the party returns and spend the evening in dancing and rejoicing. It is said that the caves of bride and bridegroom are connected by an underground passage, and it is believed that the Rāni returns to her father's house every third year, the stone produced at her periodical weddings being one and the same; the village Baiga or hedge-priest could probably explain the mystery. In former times it is said that the marriage used to be performed annually, but on one occasion after the ceremony the Rāni made her appearance at the Baiga's house, but his wife was so scandalized at her impropriety in wandering about the country the day after her wedding that she gave the Rāni a good setting-down, and as she could not explain her conduct she was punished by being married only every third year, instead of annually as before.[1]

The problems of agriculture are accompanied by various magical rites intended to promote the fertility of the crops and to protect them from malignant spirits.

In Northern India the agricultural year begins at the Akhtīj, Akshaya-tritya, 'the undying third', the third day of the light fortnight of Baisākh (April–May). In the Central Provinces a cup made of leaves of the Palāsa tree (*Butea frondosa*), filled with rice, is offered to Thākurdeo, 'Divine Lord'. The farmer goes to his field, covers his hand with a mixture of wheat-flour and turmeric, and stamps five marks with it on his plough. The landlord takes five handfuls of seed-grains, consecrates it to Thākurdeo, and each farmer sows a little, after which the

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 23 f.: cf. Hodson, *Meitheis*, 97 f.

general sowing proceeds.[1] Sowing is thus regarded as an annual crisis, a *rite de passage*, and the landlord assumes the risk of performing an act full of mystical danger, a responsibility undertaken in the central hill tract by the Baiga priest. In the plains of the United Provinces the farmer begins the year by employing a Brahman Pandit to fix an auspicious time for starting the ploughing, and this time is often fixed at night, because secrecy with the object of avoiding malignant spirits is a necessary part of the agricultural ritual. The Pandit ascertains in which direction Seshanāga, the great serpent which upholds the world, happens to be lying at the time. He marks this line in the field, digs up five clods of earth with a spade, and five times sprinkles water into the trench with a branch of the mango tree. In Bombay each tenant on the day before he begins to plant his rice, on a Tuesday, kills a chicken and sprinkles its blood over the field, offering at the same time to the field-spirit a coco-nut, a he-goat, and a chicken.[2] Among the Orāons, before the rice-sowing, the Pāhān or Baiga priest sacrifices five chickens of different colours to the village godlings. After the sowing a like sacrifice is made to ensure a bumper harvest. At sowing-time a man of the family goes to the field at midnight taking the seed-grain with him; he is careful that no one watches him as he sows it, and if he meets any one on the way he does not speak to him. He sows a few grains and returns secretly and stealthily as he came. Next morning he feeds a chicken on rice, and sets some apart to be offered on account of the family. When rice is being transplanted the village priest prays to Mother Earth or makes a libation of rice beer on the ground. Then he plants five seedlings and the women start work.[3] Before Bhīls begin sowing they set up a stone at the top of the field, smear it with vermilion, break a coco-nut over it, and call it Ganesh, the god who favours undertakings.[4] The Gāro before starting to clear a piece of jungle consults the omens. He makes a little clearance in one corner and then goes home. Next night if he is visited by a bad or unlucky dream he abandons the land which he proposed to clear, and looks for another where his omens are more propitious. When

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 84.
[2] Mead–Macgregor, *C. R.* i. 64.
[3] Sarat Chandra Roy, 142 f.
[4] Luard, *Eth. Surv.*, art. 'Bhil', 33 f.

he has cut the trees and allowed them to dry he sacrifices a fowl to the field godling on the following day. In order to ensure the favour of the spirits at sowing a personal sacrifice must be made by each farmer, and there is also a collective rite in which the whole village joins. Now Rohimī, Mother of the rice, is aroused to activity by striking the ground with the handle of a chopper.[1]

Sowing is thus a solemn, almost mournful rite, to be carried out with secrecy and caution;[2] and it is natural that part of the [illegible] the Akhtīj in Northern India is the commemoration of deceased relations who are invoked to prosper the crops. In the Central Provinces a Kurmi who has lost both his parents will invite a man and woman, call them by the names of his parents, and give them a dinner, and on this occasion the Chitrakathi mendicants worship a vessel of water in the names of their deceased ancestors.[3] The Gennas, or periods of enforced rest at all agricultural operations in Assam, are based on the idea that if the crops are to flourish the farmer must not devote time or attention to anything else.

We have seen that some person is appointed to undertake the risk of starting the general ploughing and sowing. In Hoshangabad the landlord performs this duty, or it is done in Gilgit by members of a clan believed to be specially lucky.[4] In the former District all the farmers assemble at their landlord's field before they go to their own.

'It is the custom for him to take a rupee and fasten it up in the leaf of a Palāsa tree (*Butea frondosa*) with a thorn. He also folds up several empty leaves in the same way and covers them all up with a heap of leaves. When he has done worship to the plough and bullocks, he yokes them and drives them through the heap, and all the cultivators then scramble for the leaf which contains the rupee. They then each plough their fields a little, and returning in a body they are met by the daughter or sister of their landlord, who comes to meet them with a brass vessel full of water, a light in one hand and wheaten cakes in the other. The landlord and each of the cultivators put a rupee into the water vessel and take a bit of the cakes which they put on their heads.'

[1] Playfair, 93: cf. p. 250 above.
[2] Frazer, *G. B.* 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris', ii. 40.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 39, ii. 439.
[4] Ghulam Muhammad, 120.

The rite of hiding and finding the rupee is a way of trying their luck for the coming season, and the graceful habit of women welcoming an honoured guest with water vessels and songs of joy is common in Central India and Rajputana.[1] In Hoshangabad 'on the same day an earthen jar full of water is taken by each cultivator to the threshing-floor and placed to stand on four lumps of earth, each of which bears the name of one of the four months of the rainy season. Next morning as many lumps as are wetted by the leaking of the water-jar, which is very porous and always leaks, so many months [illegible] will there be, and the cultivator makes his arrangements for the sowing accordingly.'[2]

In the lower Himalaya,

> 'on the day fixed for the commencement of ploughing the ceremonies known as Kudkhyo and Halkhyo take place. The Kudkhyo takes place in the morning or evening and begins by lighting a lamp before the household deity and offering rice, flowers, and balls made of turmeric, borax, and lemon juice, called Pitya. The conch is then sounded and the owner of the field or relative whose lucky day it is takes three or four pounds of seed from a basin and carries it to the edge of the field prepared for its reception. He then scrapes a portion of the earth with a hoe (*Kudāl*, *Kutala*, whence the name Kudkhyo), and sows a portion. One to five lamps are then placed on the ground, and the surplus seed is given away. At the Halkhyo (*hal*, "plough") the Pitya or offerings are placed on the ploughman, plough and plough cattle, and four or five furrows are ploughed and sown, and the farm servants are fed'.[3]

At Wakhan in the Hindu Kush the master of the house starts the ploughing, but when he comes back he climbs on his housetop and scatters seed through the central skylight. Then he goes to his field and traces a circular furrow round it, probably to repel evil spirits, scatters a little seed and returns home, when he finds the door barred against him, and the women will not admit him until he makes much entreaty. Next morning he rises before daybreak and drives an ass into the house, which is the cause of much joking, after which flour is sprinkled over the ass and it is driven out.[4] In Gilgit the tenants receive seed wheat from the Raja's granary, and this is placed in a

[1] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 179.
[2] Elliott, 123 f.
[3] Atkinson, ii. 856.
[4] Biddulph, 105.

sieve with twigs of the sacred cedar tree. A bonfire of cedar wood is lighted, and some of the seed is held over the smoke; the rest is ground and made into a cake which is given to the ploughman. The seed is supposed to be fertilized by the smoke of the holy tree.[1]

In the Kulu District, Panjab, at the transplanting of the rice seedlings, each family in turn keeps open house, and the neighbours, men and women, collect at the rice-fields.

> As soon as a field is ready the women enter it in line, each with a handful of young rice in her hands, and advance dabbing the young plants into the slush as they go. The mistress of the house and her daughters, dressed in their best, take their stand in front of the line and supply more bundles of plants as they are wanted. The women sing in chorus as they work; impromptu verses are often put in, which occasion a great deal of laughter. Two or three musicians are generally entertained by the master of the house, who also supplies food and drink of the best for the party. The day's work often ends with a licentious romp, in which everybody throws mud at his neighbour, or tries to give him or her a roll in it.'

This custom is confined to rice-planting, formerly the most important crop. It is also the custom to make a rude image of a man in dough, and to throw it away as a sacrifice to the Isht-deota or household godling.[2]

This contest between the workers leads to the consideration of mock fights and tugs of war as magical devices to promote fertility, the usual explanation being that the contending parties represent the good and bad spirits, it being usually arranged that the former shall win. Before the rice is transplanted Nāgas have a tug of war between women and girls on one side and men and youths on the other, the object being to take omens of the coming harvest, and the rite is followed by considerable licence.[3] Meithei men pull a bamboo against women with the same intention.[4] The war dances of the Orāons and the Sela of the Gonds are, however, probably survivals of magical mimic combats intended to secure victory in battle.[5] Similar contests between villages are possibly intended to

[1] *Ibid.* 103 f.
[2] Sir J. Lyall, *S. R.*, para. 108; *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 196; Gore, 108 f.
[3] Hodson, *Nagas*, 168. [4] Gait, *C. R. Assam*, i. 244; Hodson, *Meitheis*, 56.
[5] Sarat Chandra Roy, 281; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 109.

promote fertility. A fight between villages in Kumaun at the Bāgwāli festival led to such serious accidents that, as was the case in Nepāl, they have been officially prohibited.[1] In the United Provinces a game called Barra or 'rope' is played in the month of Kuār (September–October) at the beginning of the farming season when at a village tug of war the party that breaks it or drags it out of the hands of their opponents is regarded as victors for the coming year, when the contest is repeated.[2] At the Holi festival Bhīls have a mock combat between men and women, one of the latter seizing a man's cloth in which she puts a lump of molasses, climbing a tree and fixing it on a branch. The men swarm up to secure it and are opposed by the women brandishing long switches. The game goes on till evening, when one of the men succeeds in climbing the tree and recovering the cloth. It is possible that the tree-climbing may be a piece of mimetic magic to induce the crops to grow as high as the tree.[3] Chakmas at the funeral of a priest or headman place the corpse in a car to which ropes are attached, and those attending divide into two parties, one representing the good the other the evil spirits, and pull in different directions. The contest is so arranged that the good are victorious, but sometimes if the men representing the demons pull too vigorously 'a stick generally quells this unseemly ardour in the cause of evil'.[4] Maghs in Bengal have a tug of war over the coffin of a Phungyi between men and women or between the unmarried of either sex.[5] The town of Pushkar in Rajputana is divided into two wards which have an annual contest with sticks and stones on the day after the Holi festival, and in Ajmer devotees scramble and fight for coins before the tomb of the Saint Muan-ud-din Chishtī.[6]

Phallism naturally plays a part in such fertility rites. Nāthuram is said to have been a man of immoral character who became after his death a malignant Bhūt. His phallic image is placed beside the bride at marriage, and barren women and those whose children do not live apply to him for deliverance from their troubles.[7] A similar phallic image is paraded by

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 17, 99; D. Wright, 35 f., 156 note.
[2] Elliot, *Gloss.* 140; *N. I. N. Q.* v. 117.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 305 f.
[4] Lewin, 185.
[5] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 34.
[6] Broughton, 241.
[7] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 92; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 126.

women of the Ambig caste of fishermen in Dhārwār.[1] Among Bhīls at the Holi festival, the main object of which seems to be the promotion of fertility, a man blackened with charcoal, dressed in a blanket, and accompanied by a second man dressed as a woman, dance and sing obscene songs; so much liquor is drunk that all practically become intoxicated.[2]

The field and its crops are generally placed in charge of Khetrpāl or Kshetrapāla, 'field guardian', who appears in the Veda as Ksetrasya-pati, to whom an ox and other sacrifices used [illegible]ffered.[3] In the lower Himalaya he has now become the Dvārapāla or 'door-keeper' of Saiva temples, in other words, he is in process of promotion to become a manifestation of the god.[4] He is also identified with Bhūmiya, 'godling of the soil', and the peasant impersonates him as the black pot, smeared with streaks of white, which he hangs up in the field to protect the crops from the Evil Eye and malignant demons.

In Northern India the benevolent field spirits are the Jākh and his consort the Jākhni, who in name at least seem to represent the Yaksha, spirits which accompany Kuvera, god of wealth, and guardian of treasure, usually deemed to be inoffensive, but sometimes appearing as imps of evil, and they have been identified with the shy, wild tribes of Central India, or in Bombay with Musalmān or Persian ferrymen.[5] In the folk-tales they bear an equivocal reputation. In one tale a Yakshini, the female, plays on a lute made of bone, beguiles a man, causes horns to grow on his head, and finally devours him; in another a Brahman is turned into a Yaksha; in a third they assist a girl to get married, but carry her off because she fails to do honour to them.[6] In another form they appear as the Yech or Yāch of Kashmīr, a sprite in the shape of an animal smaller than a cat, with feet so small as to be almost invisible.[7] In Cutch they are seventy-two in number and are worshipped in the form of white horses.[8] Among the Veddas of Ceylon they

[1] *B. G.* xxii. 183 f. [2] Luard, *Eth. Surv.*, art. 'Bhīl', 39.
[3] Macdonell, *V. M.* 138; *S. B. E.* xxx. 224, 290 f., xli. 125, xlii. 14, 288, 486.
[4] Atkinson, ii. 762.
[5] Cunningham, *Bharhut*, 20 ff.; *J. R. A. S.* 1919, p. 80; *B. G.* x. 133, 235, 236, xii. 493, xiv. 73.
[6] Somadeva, i. 337 f., ii. 83, 427 f.
[7] Temple–Steele, 317; *Ind. Ant.* xi. 260 f.; *E. R. E.* iv. 401.
[8] *B. G.* i, part i, 456; v. 95, 235 f.

are known as Yakka.[1] The modern pair, the Jākh and Jākhni, or, as they are sometimes called, Chor, Chorni, 'the thieves', or Chordeva, Chordevi, 'thief godlings', are said to live apart in adjoining villages. The Jākh is an uxorious husband, and he robs his own village to supply the wants of his consort. So if you see a comparatively barren village next one the crops of which are thriving, you may be sure that the Jākh lives in one and the Jākhni in the other.[2]

Even the great gods take their share in the protection of the fields. Thus Krishna is closely connected with agriculture, and his title Dāmodar, 'belly-rope', which legend says was applied to him because his mother tied him up to prevent him from doing mischief, has been interpreted to imply that he was originally a sheaf of wheat.[3] The same may be said of Balarāma, brother of Krishna, called Phāla, 'ploughshare', Halabhrit, 'plough-bearer', Lāngati and Sankarshana, 'ploughman', Mūrali, 'holder of the pestle' with which rice is husked.[4]

Rohīmī, the Gāro Mother of Rice, has been already referred to, and when an Orāon has threshed his rice and is carrying it home, he leaves three or five handfuls on the threshing-floor, this rice being called Būrhi Khes, 'Old Mother Rice', who guards the floor until the next harvest and is represented as covered with straw, possibly, it has been suggested, to guard her from the Evil Eye or evil spirits, but she probably represents the powers of vegetation; and to guard his Jack-fruit trees till the next season of fruit he leaves on the tree the last Jack-fruit of the year as the Tree Guard.[5] Bhainas of the Central Provinces worship the godling of cultivation, Thākurdeo, 'Divine Lord', on the day before the autumn crops are sown.

'On this day all the men in the village go to his shrine taking a measure of rice and a ploughshare. At the same time the Baiga or village priest goes and bathes in the tank and is afterwards carried to the assembly on a man's shoulders. Then he makes the offering and repeats a charm, and then kneeling down he strikes the earth seven times with the ploughshare and sows five handfuls of rice, sprinkling water over the

[1] *E. R. E.* xii. 599 ff.
[2] Compare the Rangsi of the Lhota Nāgas.
[3] Growse, 52 f.; *J. R. A. S.* 1913, pp. 147, 149.
[4] Dowson, 41.
[5] Sarat Chandra Roy, 442.

seed. After him the villagers walk seven times round the altar of the god in pairs, one turning up the earth with the ploughshare and the other sowing and watering the seed. While this is going on the Baiga sits with his face covered with a piece of cloth, and at the end the villagers salute the Baiga and go home.' [1]

Possibly the Baiga is carried on a man's shoulders after acquiring magical power by bathing because he is too 'holy' to be allowed to touch the ground, and his 'holiness' accounts also for his being veiled during the rite.

Hos in Chota Nāgpur celebrate a special festival to protect the rice crop. This, known as the Damurai, is held in May, or at the time for sowing the first rice, and it is observed in honour of the deceased ancestors and of other spirits who, if not propitiated, would prevent the seed from germinating. The offerings to them consist of a he-goat and a cock. Then follows in June the Hero Bonga, or as the Mundas call it, Harihar, 'greenery'. It aims at the propitiation of Desauli, the village tutelary godling who abides in the sacred grove. Every Munda household plants a branch of the Bhelwa tree, probably *Semecarpus anacardium*, in his field, and contributes to the general offering made by the priest in the grove of a fowl, a pitcher of beer, and a handful of rice. In July each farmer sacrifices a fowl, and after some mysterious rites one of its wings is torn off and fixed in the rice-field and dung-heap. If this be omitted it is supposed that the rice will not come to maturity. The festival corresponds to the Karam of the Kols.[2] Lhota Nāgas bury a piece of rhinoceros bone near their fields to make the crops grow.[3]

A good illustration of agricultural magic is found in what have been called the Gardens of Adonis.[4] In the northern plains this is known as Jāyi, Jawāra, Bhūjaria, the barley festival, held in conjunction with the women's feast of the Salono in the rainy season, at the full moon of Sāwan (July–August), when women tie the Raksha or protective amulet round the wrists of their male friends to guard them during this unhealthy season. Under the name of Sunīnon or Sunonia, derived, like Salono, from that of the month Sāwan, it is described in the

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 231. [2] Dalton, 198. [3] Mills, 169.
[4] Frazer, *G. B.* 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris', i. 236 ff.

popular epic, the Ālha Khand, which tells of the exploits of the Banāphar Rajput heroes, Alha and Udal, in the great war between the Chandel and Chauhān Rājput clans, ending in the defeat of Paramardi or Parmāl, the chief of the Chandels (A. D. 1165–1203), by Prithivirāja Chauhān.[1]

In Gujarāt during this feast various kinds of grain are worshipped in honour of the Mother goddess, some earth is laid in the house chapel, and on its surface the grains are dropped. The earth is kept moistened, and on the tenth day the sprouts are worshipped. When an exorcist sows the grains he becomes possessed by the Mother on the eighth day, and he walks about the streets followed by women singing songs, and one of them bears a basket full of the seedlings. People suffering from seizures attributed to spirits are believed to be cured by the exorcist leaping over them. Finally, apparently as a rain charm, the basket and seedlings are thrown into a well or river. At marriages, thread-girdings, and pregnancies these grains are sown in baskets, and the Mother is invoked to enter the seedlings, which are worshipped daily and finally thrown into water.[2] In the same Province on the sixth day of the month Āsārh (June–July) Brahman girls fill earthen dishes with loose soil from an ant-hill mixed with dry powdered cow-dung, and in this they sow wheat or barley seeds, so that they should have sprouted before the great holiday of the girls, the Molakāta, when they remain sitting in one place and eat nothing flavoured with salt.[3] Daughters of an Orāon headman grow these seedlings, present them to the sacred Karam tree, and then present them to their friends to be worn in their hair.[4] Rajputs wear them in their turbans at the annual sacred marriage of Īsvara or Siva with her consort, Gauri.[5] In fact, the use of this fertility charm is common throughout India and its borderlands.[6]

The festivals intended to protect and promote the fertility of cattle form a group of their own. One of these is the Dīvālī or Feast of Lamps, held at the new moon of Kārttik (October–

[1] Smith, *Early History*, 393; *A. S. R.* ii. 455.
[2] *B. G.* ix, part i, 392.
[3] Stevenson, *Rites*, 51 f.
[4] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 146.
[5] Tod, ii. 666.
[6] Robertson, 466 f.; Thurston, *T. C.* vii. 302 f., 307; *B. G.* ix, part i, 306; Luard, *Eth. Surv.* 38; Alberuni, *Chronology*, 202.

November). On that day Bhīls offer a thanksgiving to their godlings near the cattle-shed. A lighted lamp and seven balls of cooked rice are laid within a circle formed by grains of the same cereal. A fire is kept lighted by sprinkling ghi on it. The householder lays his hands on five chickens, throws water on them, and offers them as a sacrifice, saying, 'O Dharma Indra! we offer this sacrifice to thee. During the coming year keep our cattle free from disease, increase them, and be kindly!' Another man makes an oblation of wine, saying, 'O Dharma Indra, we pour this to thee!' The cows and oxen, with their horns painted red, are then released from their stalls, that of the headman being first opened. When all the cattle are collected they are driven over the body of a Bhīl, generally a cowherd, who lies on the ground at full length, face downwards. As a reward he receives from the headman a cloth or a turban.[1] This has been interpreted as a commutation of an original human sacrifice, but its meaning is obscure.[2] In the Deccan a similar rite of cattle-racing is used as a means for prognosticating the prospects of the coming season. On the full-moon day of Jeth (May–June) the cattle are fed on special food and raced towards the village gates. If a white ox is the first to enter, the white millet crop will be plentiful; if a red ox wins, the red millet will thrive.[3] In Hoshangabad cowherds perform the rite of frightening the cattle.

'Every one keeps watch at night, and the herdsmen go out begging in a body, singing and keeping the cattle from sleeping. In the morning they are all stamped with the hand dipped in yellow paint for the white ones, and white paint for the red ones, and strings of cowries or peacocks' feathers are tied to their horns. Then they are drawn out with loud shouts or yells, and the herdsman, standing at the doorway, smashes an earthen water-jar on the last. The neck of this is placed on the gateway leading to the cattle-shed, and preserves them from the Evil Eye. In the afternoon the cattle are all collected together, and the Parihār priest sprinkles them with water, after which they are secure from all possible evils.'[4]

It was a Vedic custom to drive the calves from their mother by

[1] *B. G.* ix, part i, 306.
[2] Crooke, 'Bull-baiting, Bull-racing, Bull-fights', *Folk-lore*, xxviii. 154 ff.
[3] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 274; *B. G.* xxii. 138.
[4] Elliott, 37; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 33.

striking them with a branch of the Palāsa tree (*Butea frondosa*).[1] The meaning of these customs is somewhat obscure, but the racing of the cattle may be intended to promote the vitality of the herd, and the pouring of water over them and striking them with a sacred branch may make them fertile.

The Dīvāli festival is followed by the Govardhan, a name applied to the town near Mathura, associated with the legends of Krishna and the Gopis or cowherd maidens, and meaning 'nourisher of kine'. In parts of the northern plains on this day cowherds go round half drunk, collecting gifts from their employers and singing, 'May this house grow as the sugar-cane grows, as the Ganges at her sacred confluence with the Jumna!' In the Panjab the women make a Govardhan of cow-dung, representing Krishna lying on his back surrounded by little cottage loaves of dung to represent mountains, in which are stuck stems of grass with tufts of cotton or rags on the top for trees, and with little dung-balls for cattle, watched by dung-men dressed in little bits of rag. According to another explanation the cottage loaves are cattle and the dung-balls calves. On this structure they place the churn-staff, five white sugar-canes, some parched rice, and a lighted lamp in the middle. The cowherds are then invited and they salute the images as they feast on rice and sweets. A Brahman next takes part in this rural rite by eating a bit of sugar-cane, and until this is done no one must eat, cut, or press the cane. Brahmans are fed on rice-milk and the oxen have their horns dyed red and receive extra food.[2] Akbar, who was fond of patronizing rural cults, arranged that 'on the day of the Dīvāli, on which the Hindus pray to the cow—as they look on the reverence shown to cows as worship—several cows are adorned and brought before his Majesty'.[3] In Bihār the Gwāla cowherds at the Dīvāli tie a pig by the feet and drive their cattle over the animal till it is crushed to death, after which they boil and eat the meat in the fields. Next day is the Govardhan, when women of all castes pray to a mass of cow-dung made in human form, and distribute the sacred dung to their relatives, 'to whom at the same time they threaten death as impending from some accident, which is

[1] *S. B. E.* xii. 183: cf. *Folk-lore*, vi. 158.
[2] Ibbetson, 120.
[3] *Āīn-i-Akbari*, i. 216.

considered as abuse', abusive language being a well-known prophylactic against evil.[1] At Cawnpore in the United Provinces the Dāng or 'club' Dīvāli is celebrated by cowherds, who worship Govardhan in the form of a little heap of cow-dung decorated with cotton, and go round to the houses of those whose cattle they graze, dancing to the music of two sticks beaten together and a drum played by a Hindu weaver, demanding gifts of grain, cloth, or money.[2]

In the Deccan and other parts of the Bombay Presidency the chief cattle festival is the Pola, Pol meaning the bull branded with the insignia of Siva or Vishnu released after a death. It is held on the new moon of the month Sāvan or Bhādon (July–September). Kunbis in the Ahmadnagar District hold it in August, when they cover the cowshed with tinsel-paper or vermilion, tie tassels made of the fibre of the Palāsa tree (*Butea frondosa*) to the tips of the bullocks' horns, deck them with flowers, feed them with sugar, bow at their feet, rub them with sandalwood paste, and lay boiled rice before them. In the evening the herd is driven to the temple of the ape-god, Māruti or Hanumān, and made to circle round it, the cattle of the headman leading the procession.[3] Kunbis in the Central Provinces have a procession of their plough oxen at the Pola, about the middle of the rainy season. An old ox leads with the Makhar, a wooden frame on which torches are fixed, tied on its horns. A rope made of mango leaves is stretched across the road between two posts, and the Makhar ox is forced to break this with its horns and stampede back to the stalls, followed by all the other cattle. It is said that the Makhar bullock is doomed to die within the year. In the procession the cattle are arranged according to the rank of their owners, and a Kunbi feels bitterly the loss of the position to which he thinks himself entitled.[4] In Berar the cattle at the Pola festival pass in procession under the Toran or sacred rope dedicated to the ape-god Māruti, which is made of twisted grass covered with mango leaves.[5] In this decorated rope we have the prototype of the Toran, a wreath of mango leaves hung over the bride's door which the bridegroom when he comes

[1] Buchanan, i. 194 f.; Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 279 ff.
[2] F. N. Wright, 105. [3] *B. G.* xvii. 89. [4] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 40.
[5] Lyall, *Gaz.* 207.

to fetch her is required to touch with his sword,[1] or he breaks a row of clay images of parrots hung in the same way, and of the Japanese Torü which serves the same purpose and have come, with their name, from India.[2] This touching of the Toran is sometimes interpreted as a survival of the Taru-parīksha, an ancient rite in which the bridegroom proved his manliness or courage, but it seems rather to imply an attempt on his part to take over the luck of his wife's house by striking or breaking the Toran, because there is a general scramble for the fragments of it which are kept as charms.[3]

At the Munda cattle festival, known as the Soharai, lights are lit over the cattle, their owner throws rice over their shoulders, and a black cock and rice beer are offered to Gorea or Goraiya, the cattle guardian. Next morning the mistress of the house washes their hoofs, beer is sprinkled over them, a red cock is sacrificed, the buffaloes are anointed with ghi, and special food is given to them.[4] Among the Orāons bachelors in a state of nudity chase the cattle, breaking with their bludgeons any earthen pots which they find exposed to view, and striking any one they happen to meet, the object being to drive all cattle disease to the village boundary.[5]

Besides the general usages at ploughing and sowing, special precautions are taken in the case of certain crops. Betel is a very delicate plant, and in Bengal the owner will not enter the vinery until he has bathed and washed his clothes; the low-caste man employed in digging must bathe before he starts work; animals found inside are driven out; women ceremonially impure dare not enter within the gate; a Brahman never sets foot inside, old men object to enter, but it has been used for assignations.[6] Similar taboos operate in the case of women. Indulgence in sexual intercourse debars a Lhota Nāga woman from dyeing cloth and for a man in taking a bees' nest; those youths who cut the post for the Bachelors' Hall must have remained chaste for three days; women must not be present

[1] Tod, i. 207.

[2] Grünwedel, 21; Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, 3rd ed., 407 f.

[3] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 29; Russell, *T. C.* i. 148; Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 371; Briggs, 78 f.

[4] Sarat Chandra Roy, 481. According to Dehon (i. 173) this is also an Orāon custom.

[5] Sarat Chandra Roy, 253 ff.

[6] Risley, *T. C.* i. 73.

where free living is going on; the flesh of certain animals is forbidden to women, the reason being, as Mr. Mills suggests, that the eating of animals which damage the crops will pass on this habit to women, who are responsible for the household food supply, and will thereby cause the family stores to be depleted.[1] The explanation of the fact that a Brahman cannot interfere with the plant is that in Bengal a man of this caste is said to have been the first grower of betel. Through his neglect the plant grew so high that he was obliged to use his sacred cord to fasten down the tendrils. But as it grew faster than he could supply thread it was placed in charge of another group, the Kāyasth or writer caste.[2] This is obviously an aetiological explanation of the taboo against the Brahman interfering with it, and he is excluded from the vinery probably because his 'sanctity' is supposed to exercise an injurious effect on such a tender plant.

Sugar-cane, a valuable but precarious crop, liable to injury by fluctuations of the weather and exposed to danger from a mysterious blight and from insects, needs special precautions. In Bareilly in the United Provinces when it is being planted the man who plants the cuttings is decorated with silver ornaments, a necklace and flowers, and a mark of vermilion is made on his forehead as a protection against the Evil Eye and spirit dangers. It is considered lucky if a man on horseback comes into the field at the time, possibly because it is hoped that the plant will grow as high as the rider, and a horse is a lucky animal. After the planting is over, all the labourers are feasted, and the surplus cuttings are carefully burnt as it is believed that plants grown from them will flower, which is fatal to the crop.[3] In Karnāl, a District of the Panjab, on the first day of planting sweetened rice is brought to the field, women smear the outside of an earthen pot with it, possibly as a protective, and distribute it to the labourers. Next morning a woman puts on a necklace and walks round the field winding thread on a spindle, possibly in the belief that this makes the plants grow thick and strong, or the intention may be to ward off evil influences by making a magic circle round the crop.[4] Mr. Russell suggests that toys,

[1] Mills, 38, 69, 71, 77 note, 133.
[2] Risley, *T. C.* i. 72.
[3] Moens, 93.
[4] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 136.

like the spindle, which are wound and unwound by means of a string, 'are in a manner connected with the crops, and supposed to have a magical influence, because during the same period, that is when the crop is growing, boys walk on stilts and play at swinging themselves; and in these cases the original idea is to make the crops grow as high as the stilts or swing'.[1] With the same intention Uriyas during the rainy season make a wedge-shaped mound of earth, fix on it a pole to which a garland is hung, and then the men run up the mound and try to seize the flowers, a rite analogous to that of the Bhīls already described.[2]

Chamārs in the United Provinces perform the Gayās rite at the cutting of sugar-cane. A few stalks of the cane are bound together and beneath the knot a small pot is quickly filled with water, in the hope that the cane may be abundantly filled with sap. A fire sacrifice is made and the men march round the field once, thrice, or five times, after which they break off some of the canes and bring them home. These are offered on an altar or placed on a bed, with an axe, shovel, or sickle, all covered with a piece of new cloth. A fire sacrifice is again made and the women sing praises to the village godlings. Then the canes brought home are cut in pieces and distributed to friends, the first stalks being cut by the men who collect the juice for boiling. Meanwhile the women cook Urad pulse (*Phaseolus mungo*), draw a figure on the house wall, wave a basket beneath it, and sing in honour of Vishnu-Nārāyan. Some of the cane is then eaten and some distributed to friends and beggars. At other times some of the juice is offered to the goddess Chāmunda or Durga, some is poured on the ground for the Earth Mother, and the remainder is boiled down, the sugar being given to the workmen, their sisters, and daughters.[3] In Bihār the first sugar-cane is cut on the Deothān, the 11th of the bright half of Kārttik (October–November), when Vishnu

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 111; *id.*, *Betūl Gaz.* i. 91; *id.*, *Nāgpur Gaz.* i. 95: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', ii. 119 note, who quotes the converse case in Italy, where women were prohibited from twirling a spindle on the roads, because this was supposed to injure the crops (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 28). Can it be that the Romans thought that this act caused the corn to become matted or laid?

[2] Rice, S. W., 42 f.; p. 259 above.

[3] Briggs, 175.

wakes from his four months' sleep. Some people tie a few canes together, place a neck-ring on the top, pour perfumes over it, after which they remove the neck-ring and begin cutting.[1]

In the Central Provinces bunches of wild rice are hung up in the house in August, when the crop is growing, to represent the Mother rice-plant.[2] Kurmis in the same Province observe the Hareli or 'feast of greenery' in the middle of Sāwan (July–August) when the rice is sprouting. Balls of flour mixed with salt are given to the cattle. The plough and other implements are taken to a tank, washed, and set up in the courtyard of the house. The plough is placed facing the sun, and butter and sugar are offered to it. Human figures are drawn with charcoal on a whitewashed earthen pot which is hung over the door to avert the Evil Eye. All the holes in the floor of the courtyard and cattle-sheds are filled up with gravel and levelled, and while the rice is growing Sundays, the Sun's days, are kept as holidays and no work is done.[3] Bhuiyas, Kols, and Binds in the United Provinces also worship during the rainy season Hariyāri Devi 'Mother of Greenery', by employing their Baiga priest to sacrifice chickens and to pour a libation of wine on the field after harvest or before the sowing season.[4]

Cotton is also a delicate, precarious crop which needs protection. In Bareilly when the cotton has sprung up the owner of a field goes there on a Sunday forenoon with some ghi, sweetmeats, and cakes, makes a Hom or burnt-offering, offers some of the food to the field spirit, and eats what is left in silence. When the crop comes into flower some parched rice is taken to the field and thrown broadcast over the plants, the remainder being given to children, the intention being that as the rice grains swell and become white after parching, so may the bolls of the cotton swell. When the cotton is ready for picking the women employed for the work go to the north or east corner of the field—the former the home of the gods, the latter of the Sun—with parched rice and sweetmeats. They pick two or three large bolls, and, sitting down, pull from them as long a thread as possible without breaking it. This thread they tie on the tallest

[1] Grierson, 398.
[2] *J. R. A. S.* 1899, p. 350: cf. Frazer, *op. cit.* i. 203 f.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 84.
[4] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 83, 113, iii. 314.

plant they can find in the field, which is known as Bhogaldāi, 'Mother of fruition', or Sardār, 'leader'. Round this they sit, fill their mouths as full as possible with the parched rice, and blow it out as far as they can towards all the points of the compass; this makes the bolls swell. A fire sacrifice is then made and picking begins.[1] In other parts of the country the women eat rice and milk in the field and spit out the first mouthful towards the west. The first cotton picked is exchanged for its weight in salt, over which prayers are offered, and it is kept in the house till the picking is finished.[2]

Reaping is a work requiring care and caution, and it should be begun only after due observance of the omens. Often the land-owner, headman, or village priest, as in a *rite de passage*, cuts the first handful of the corn. The Lhota Nāga kills a pig and offers a share of the meat to Rangsi, the field spirit who gives good crops, and prays to the other Rangsis attached to other people who have no crops, or are busy elsewhere, to come and help him in the work of reaping.[3] In Hoshangabad, when the reaping is nearly over, a small patch of corn is left standing in the last field, and the reapers rest for a while. Then they make a rush at this piece, tear up the corn and cast it into the air, shouting victory to Omkārji Mahārāja, the great form of Siva whose temple is at Māndhāta on the Narbada, to Jhamaji, Rāmjidās, and other village godlings whom they worship. The corn is bound into a sheaf, tied to a bamboo, stuck up in the last harvest cart, carried home in triumph, and fastened up on the threshing-floor, to a tree, or on the cattle-shed, where it serves to avert the Evil Eye and malignant spirits.[4] Chamārs in the United Provinces leave a little corn standing in the field, tear it up with shouts of victory to the godlings, or leave it uncut for the field spirit or to serve as its refuge. Sometimes the women attack the last sheaf, cut it, mix the corn with other grain, take it home, boil it, and distribute it when it is cooked.[5] At the beginning of harvest Gonds pluck an ear of corn and say, 'Whatever god is the guardian of this place, this is your share, take it and do not interfere!'[6] The last stalks in the field are

[1] Moens, 6, 57, 93. [2] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 137; Ibbetson, 119; Briggs, 175.
[3] Mills, 54 f. [4] Elliott, 178. [5] Briggs, 174.
[6] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 107.

cut, sent home in charge of a little girl, and put in the bottom of the house corn-bin. Among Kurmis in the same Province

'sometimes the oldest man in the house cuts the first five bundles of the crop, and they are left in the field for the birds to eat. And at the end of harvest the last one or two sheaves are left standing in the field, and are known as Barhavna, or the giver of increase. Then all the labourers rush together at the last patch of corn and tear it up by the roots; everybody secures as much as he can and keeps it, the master having no share in this patch. After the Barhavna has been torn up all the labourers fall on their faces on the ground and worship the field. In other places the Barhavna is left standing for the birds to eat'.[1]

In the Sohāgpur District of the same Province the Corn Baby is made from the last corn reaped; it is tied to a bamboo pole and erected on the heap of grain ready for winnowing.[2] The Orāon farmer calls the last clump of rice-stalks the 'Field Guard', and he believes that it keeps watch over the field until the next sowing or transplantation, as the case may be. Nowadays, however, this cluster of sheaves is taken away by any one who chooses to do it, barring, of course, the owner of the field or any member of his family. But this restriction is now disregarded in some places. In fact, in some Orāon villages the owner himself brings home these sheaves on an auspicious day, preferably a Monday, and describes this as 'bringing the Bride home'. When the rest of the paddy or unhusked rice has been threshed and garnered these last sheaves are taken home and threshed, and the paddy grains are carefully set aside to serve as the seed-grain for the next harvest.[3] Again, when an Orāon has threshed his rice and is bringing it home he leaves three or five handfuls of the grain on the threshing-floor. This paddy is called Būrhi Khes, or 'Old Mother Rice'. It is said that the Corn Mother watches over the threshing-floor until the next harvest. The Corn Mother is usually covered over with straw, probably to protect it from the Evil Eye or evil spirit.[4]

[1] *Ibid.* iv. 86. In the United Provinces Barhāvan is the name of the piece of cow-dung placed as a protective on the heaped corn: Elliot, *Gloss.* 137 f.

[2] *Folk-lore*, xxxii. 215 f.

[3] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', i. 203 f.

[4] Sarat Chandra Roy, 441 ff.: on the Last Sheaf and Corn Baby see Frazer, *loc. cit.* i. 131 ff.

The use of the first-fruits of the harvest is carefully regulated, because all that is new is 'sacred' or taboo, not to be touched by man until the taboo is removed by certain ceremonies. In the same way, doing anything for the first time, a *rite de passage*, such as entering a new state like puberty or marriage, is fraught with danger. Hence the eating of the first-fruits is often accompanied by the dedication of part of the produce to the Higher Powers. In the United Provinces the rite is known as Navān, 'new grain'. The owner of the field watches the omens, and at an auspicious time goes to the field, plucks five or six ears of the crops of the autumn or spring harvest. These are parched, mixed with coarse sugar, ghi, and curds, and part is thrown on the house fire in the name of the village godling or of some ancestor; then the rest is eaten ceremonially by the family. Some high-caste Hindus in the plains celebrate the festival known as Navānna Pūrnimā, 'the full moon of the new corn', that immediately following the Dasahra, known in ancient times as Āgrāyaneshti, 'first-fruits' rite', when Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, presides over the household godlings, wreaths of rice grains and flowers are hung over the doors, and porridge made of the new rice is offered to the gods and eaten as a special dainty.[1] In Ladakh 'the main rafters of the house are supported by cylindrical or square pillars of wood, the top of which, under the truss, is in the houses of the peasantry encircled by a band of straw and ears of wheat, forming a primitive sort of capital. It is the custom, I was told, to consecrate the two or three first handfuls of each year's crop to the spirit who presides over agriculture, and these bands are thus deposited; sometimes rams' horns are added to the decoration.[2] In the Panjab on this occasion some of the new grain is presented to Brahmans, Sādhas, or revered ancestors, and to the local godling before any one dares to partake of it. In Kangra when it is brought home incense is burned and a lamp lighted near it before it is stored, relations are entertained, and best wishes exchanged. In Chitral on the evening before the regular festival at dark a member of the household secretly gathers a handful of ears of

[1] Gupte, 180; *S. B. E.* xii. 369.

[2] Moorcroft–Trebeck, i. 317 f.: on horns as protection see *E. R. E.* v. 613. Some Nāgas replace them by crossed bamboos: Mills, 34.

corn, a few of which are hung over the house door, and the rest are roasted next morning, steeped in milk, and eaten. The day is spent in rejoicing and then the harvest begins. It may be necessary to cut some of the early crops before the appointed day, and this is allowed, but eating the new corn before the festival would cause misfortune.[1] In the lower Himlaya the first-fruits are offered to the field godlings, Khetrpāl and Bhūmiya, with a prayer that they may protect the stored grain from rats and insects.[2] Dāngris in the Central Provinces offer the first-fruits to Siva-Mahādeva and to a Brahman to ensure the success of the crop, and the Gonds perform in Bhādon (August) the Nawākhāi or eating of the new rice, when some old and new crop are mixed and offered raw to the ancestors, and then they begin to eat the new rice. In the same way when the Mahua tree (*Bassia latifoli*) flowers they go to the forest and do worship under a Sāj tree (*Terminalia tomentosa*).[3]

Mundas have no regular rite except in some places where in imitation of the Hindus they eat the new rice parched with milk, curds, and molasses. But with Orāons it is a serious matter. Some of the new grain is offered to Sarna Būrhi, the Old Lady of the sacred grove, and some to ancestors. Before daybreak the Pāhān or Baiga priest gathers some rice from a man's field, informing him beforehand that he intends to do so, because it would be a bad omen if he expressed annoyance. The wife of the priest, in whose house the elders assemble, parches the grain. The priest purifies himself by bathing, takes some of the parched rice into the room where the winnowing basket of the Old Lady is hung up, and gives her a share. The remainder, thus sanctified, is distributed to all present.[4] When the Koch of Assam harvest the early grain some is dedicated to ancestors, calling them by name and clapping their hands, 'as they have no artificial method of making such a noise as most pagan natives and even Hindus consider necessary to rouse or please their gods'.[5] Before they harvest their crops Gāros pluck some ears of rice and millet, pound them between two stones, and

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 437, ii. 179.
[2] Atkinson, ii. 25.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 464, iii. 115.
[4] Sarat Chandra Roy, *Mundas*, 480; *id.*, *Orāons*, 146 f.; Dehon, 137.
[5] Dalton, 91.

offer them to their gods on a piece of plantain stem.[1] Among Lhota Nāgas after a sacrifice the priest's wife or the priest himself, if he be a widower, cuts the rice sown in a special plot at a previous ceremony, no matter how unripe it may be. He cooks some and pretends to eat it, praying that squirrels, rats, and birds may find the rice of the village bitter. A little of the new rice is wrapped in a leaf and kept in the bin into which the day's supply is put every morning. The priest and his wife thus run the risk of eating the tabooed grain, and part of it is reserved as a means of promoting fertility.[2]

Special rites also accompany the threshing of the corn. Kurmis of the Central Provinces before threshing offer a goat, fowl, or broken coco-nut to Thākurdeo, 'divine Lord', and each evening at the end of the day's threshing a wisp of straw is rubbed on the forehead of each bullock, a hair is pulled from its tail, and the hair and straw, made into a bundle, are tied to the central pole of the threshing-floor round which the cattle revolve. The farmers pray: 'O god of plenty! Enter here full and go out empty!' Before leaving the threshing-floor for the night some straw is burnt, three circles are drawn with the ashes, another round the pole, and outside the circles pictures are drawn of the sun, moon, a lion, and a monkey, or of a cart and pair of oxen. Next morning before sunrise the ashes are swept away by waving a winnowing-fan over them.[3] Mundas do not thresh their corn until the Kharihān Pūja, or threshing-floor rite, is done at the floor of the Pāhān priest in which the Bongas or spirits are worshipped with sacrifices of fowls and oblations of rice beer, and the people eat, drink, and dance all night at the Pāhān's house or the village Akhra or meeting-place.[4] In Bombay before setting up the central pole on the threshing-floor an astrologer is invited to say what kind of wood should be used in making it, and under it twigs of mango and other holy trees are burned. A shrine is set up consisting of an earthen pot and seven pebbles, five of which represent the Pāndava heroes of the Great War, with one each for Vandev, the forest godling, and for Vansapatra, the bamboo or jungle lord. The pot and pebbles are smeared with vermilion, incense is burned before

[1] Playfair, 81, 94. [2] Mills, 53 f. [3] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 85.
[4] Sarat Chandra Roy, 479: for Orāons, Dehon, 146 f.

them, and offerings of animal victims, grain, or fruit are made.[1]

Winnowing is an equally serious undertaking. In Hoshangabad when the village priest has fixed a lucky time the farmer with his wife and family goes to the threshing-floor, carrying with him offerings such as milk, ghi, turmeric, and grain. The pole is washed in water and an offering is made to it and to the pile of threshed grain. Some corn is sprinkled over the place in the hope that the Bhūts or evil spirits will take it and spare the rest. Then the farmer stands on a three-legged stool and winnows five baskets of the threshed grain, after which the work goes on.[2] At winnowing Kunbis in the Deccan offer rice at the shrine of the Pāndavas and scatter rice over the floor. When an animal is sacrificed the rice is steeped in its blood before it is sprinkled.[3] One special precaution must be taken during winnowing: while the work is going on the basket must never stand on its bottom, but should be placed upside down lest malevolent spirits may carry away the grain.

Measuring the grain also needs care and caution. The general practice is that before the corn is measured to stack it in the shape of a trapezium with the shorter end facing the south, not in the form of a square or oblong heap. The measurer stands facing the east with the shorter end of the pile on his left, and on the longer side are placed the reaping-hook, the winnowing-fan, the rope by which the oxen are tethered to the pole, one or two branches of the Ber or wild plum tree (*Zizyphus jujuba*), and the twisted bundle of bullocks' hair and straw which had been tied to the pole. On the top of the pole are placed five balls of cow-dung, known in the United Provinces as Barhāvan, 'giving the increase',[4] as they avert the Evil Eye from the corn, and thieves cannot steal from the heap without disturbing the arrangement of these dung-balls. To these a fire sacrifice is offered. The first measure of corn is laid near the pole, and the measurer never quite empties the measure while he is at work lest the god of plenty may be displeased and quit the threshing-floor; he must also not wear a turban as a mark of respect to the god and the corn. It is unlucky for a man mounted on

[1] Mead–Macgregor, *C. R.* i. 64.
[2] Elliott, 78 f.
[3] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 295.
[4] p. 267 above.

an elephant to enter the floor at the time, but as a man who has once ridden a tiger brings luck, Gonds and Baigas if they catch and tame a tiger cub take it round the country and make money by letting children ride on its back. You must never stand on the floor with shoes on your feet, and you should measure at morning or evening, not at noon, because at that time a man loses his shadow, and the crop may accordingly be short.[1] In the eastern Panjab grain should not be measured on the day of the new or full moon, and Saturday is naturally an unlucky day. It must be done at dawn, sunset, or midnight, when Bhūts are supposed to be otherwise engaged. Four men go inside the enclosure line of the threshing-floor, and no other must come near them till the work is finished. They sit facing the north and spread a cloth on the ground. One fills the measure from the heap with a winnowing-fan, another empties it on the cloth, substituting an empty measure for that used. The measurer puts down a grain of corn for every measure that is filled, and thus the account is kept. Perfect silence must be observed till the work is finished, lest something unlucky may be said, and especially all counting aloud of the number of measures must be avoided. When once the corn has been measured it is safe from the Evil Eye and evil spirits, and the claimants to it may then squabble about the division.[2]

Various precautions are taken to protect the crop from blight and insects, both of which are believed to be due to the machinations of evil spirits. In the Narbada valley the people attributed the serious blight to which their crops had been for some years subject to the measure of adultery which had followed the introduction of British law; or to the frequent measurement and inspection of the land during revenue assessments which had offended Mother Earth; or to the eating of beef.[3] When blight attacks the corn in Kashmīr the farmer begs an amulet from a holy man and ties it on a post in his rice field, or he scatters charmed dust over the crops, or he sets

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 85 f.; Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 306; *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 172; Moens, 78: on the shadow superstition, Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 88; *E. R. E.* iii. 82.

[2] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 218 note: on the danger of counting, Frazer, *F. L. O. T.* ii 555 ff.: on the mode of assigning the shares see Baden-Powell, 16 ff.

[3] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 193 ff.: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', ii. 167 ff.

up poplar wands in the fields, or he gets a widow to wade through them with her head uncovered.[1] Orāons on the morning of the Karama festival plant in their fields twigs of various trees to which, at a rite performed on the previous day, magic has been imparted by the ghost doctor, the intention being to keep evil spirits from the corn; or they set up a post on which is fixed an earthen pot painted black and white; or they split the post into three prongs, like the Trisūla or trident of Siva, to act as a protection.[2]

In Bareilly, United Provinces, when sugar-cane germinates the owner of the field does worship to avert the malign influence of the planet Saturn which rules that day. On one of the Naurātri days sacred to Devi-Durga,[3] in the month of Kuār (September–October), he or his family priest offers a fire sacrifice and prayers in the field, and in Kārttik (October–November) he does a special rite to expel the destructive Sūndi grub. For this last purpose he carries from his house some ghi, cakes, sweetmeats, five or six pear-shaped lumps of dough, and some clean water. He offers a fire sacrifice in the field and offers some of the cakes to the field spirit. Then he lays one of the dough lumps at each corner of the field as an offering to Mother Earth, eats the rest of the cakes, and goes home happy.[4] Kunbis in the Central Provinces, in order to avert the attack of insects, bring, often from a long distance, water from the well of the Saint Farīd at Girar, and sprinkle it over the field.[5] At Sāgar in the Central Provinces a man was once instructed in a dream that water from the river Biās, if drawn at a certain point in its course and carried in pitchers to the fields, would avert blight, but only on the condition that the pitchers were not allowed to touch the ground. A hole was to be made in the bottom of the pitcher and the water was to be allowed to drop in a circle all round the field, leaving only a small gap through which the blight demon might make his escape. Crowds of people, many from a distance of a hundred miles, came to fetch the water, and it was estimated that nearly half a million persons joined in the rite.[6] In the Deccan, if the crops are attacked by rust,

[1] Lawrence, 334.
[2] Sarat Chandra Roy, 144 f.
[3] Gupte, 181 ff.
[4] Moens, 93.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 42.
[6] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 204 f.

a fowl is sacrificed or a coco-nut is offered to the village godling, and the village priest receives a fee for performing the service.[1] In the Panjab, when the crops suffer from insects, a camel's bone is burned so that the smoke may drift over the field, charms are recited, the owner walks round eating parched wheat, a share of which he must give to any one he meets, but he must not speak to him.[2]

Orāons in the month Kārttik (October–November) send out boys to catch the field mice, which are skinned, disembowelled, and dried. In Māgh (January–February) these are roasted, and with the money realized from fines imposed on those who did not catch the required number a sacramental feast is provided.[3] In Northern India, when field mice damage the crops, the farmer goes to a Syāna or wizard who writes a charm, the letters of which are dissolved in water and scattered over the field. The Bombay Districts have been from time to time visited by a plague of bush rats (*Golunda Ellioti*), and during a visitation in 1879 the people objected to the measures adopted by the Government to destroy the animals, because they believed that they were the embodied spirits of those who died in the famine three years before, or that they were a plague sent by the gods to punish sin. Accordingly, goats, fowls, and coco-nuts were offered to the village godlings, Brahmans were fed, and prayers were offered for seven days in the village temples.[4]

Flights of locusts, which often cause serious damage, are scared by shouting, lighting of fires, beating of brass pots, and, in light cases, by ringing the temple bells. Farmers in Khāndesh get rid of them by repeating a prayer and laying a rupee in the direction of their flight so as to induce them to depart.[5] In the Central Provinces when caterpillars or locusts appear the Gārpagāri, whose special duty is to avert hail-stones, catches one or two, offers them at the shrine of Mahābīr, the ape-godling, and throws them up in the air as a hint to their comrades to disappear, or he buries one alive and by thus frightening the others stops the plague.[6] Further south, if the crops of a Badaga are attacked by insects, a Kurumba, one of the forest tribes, is

[1] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 295 f.
[2] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 220.
[3] Sarat Chandra Roy, 257 f.
[4] Blanford, 427 f.; *B. G.* xvii. 280 f.
[5] *B. G.* xii. 182.
[6] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 22.

sent for and is made to low like a calf, a proceeding believed to kill the insects.[1] In Baluchistan a Sayyid family specializes in locust scaring, and father passes on the charms to son, brother to brother, by spitting into his mouth, with the result that the man thus filled with the spirit goes mad, but the attack soon passes away leaving behind it a wonderful power, for when a swarm of locusts appear all the Sayyid has to do is to catch a locust, spit into its mouth, and let it go, when all its fellows depart at once.[2] The hill tribes in Mirzapur, when a flight of locusts come, catch one, decorate its head with a spot of vermilion, salaam to it, and let it go, on which the whole flight immediately disappears.[3] Lhota Nāgas, when the crop is half grown, perform a rite to prevent damage by grubs. The priest collects rice from the whole village, and with it buys a pig which he kills. Then he goes outside the village and lays ten pieces of meat and ten of ginger on leaves to his right, and nine of each to his left. The next day is a holiday for field work. On one occasion a failure of the crops was attributed to the fact of a stranger entering the priest's house after he had collected the rice and before he had completed the rite.[4]

[1] Metz, 113. [2] Bray, *C. R.* 67 f.

[3] For the King Locust see Frazer, *Pausanias*, v. 12; Burton, *A Thousand Nights and a Night*, ix. 204.

[4] Mills, 49.

X

THE EVIL EYE

The belief in the danger resulting from the Evil Eye prevails widely in Northern India. The term by which it is known is Nazar, 'sight, vision', used specially in the sense of the baleful influence emanating from the glance of certain classes of people or individuals. The popular explanation of the origin of this belief is that it is based on envy or covetousness. Thus a man blind of an eye, though he may ordinarily be well disposed, is almost certain to envy a person who possesses a particularly good pair of eyes. The same is the case with persons suffering in other ways, such as the hunchback, the lame, or the deaf, the old man or woman who envies the good health, youth, or good looks of others, the childless woman who covets the sons of more fortunate mothers. A person afflicted with a squint or cast in the eye is a source of danger, as well as a man who has lost one of his eyes. A clerk in the writer's office once suffered from a squint, with the result that the accounts of his comrades went wrong, and they made so many mistakes in copying letters and other work that they compelled him to cover his offending organ with a cloth during his employment. The Hindu lawgiver classes a one-eyed man with others who are to be carefully avoided, possibly because the glance of such a person is more concentrated than that of ordinary people.[1] Such people are sometimes called Sukrāchārya, the name of the regent of the planet Venus, because the demon Bali is said to have poked out his eye, and Mahā Singh, one of the Jaisalmer princes, was disqualified from succeeding to the throne because he was blind of an eye.[2] When Jaswant Rāo Holkar lost one of his eyes he said, 'I was bad enough before, but now I shall be the Guru, preceptor of rogues!'[3] The great Sir David Ochterlony is said to have suffered in the same way, and was in consequence much dreaded. But the explanation which suggests

[1] Manu, *Laws*, iii. 155. [2] Tod, ii. 1234. [3] Malcolm, i. 253 note.

that the Evil Eye is the result of covetousness or envy is doubtless derivatory or merely an attempt at explaining its origin, and it must not be confounded with other assumed forces, the result of art, magic, or witchcraft, such as overlooking, cursing, bewitching, or the like. It is generally believed that certain persons or things possess the inherent power of discharging a glance so maleficent that it strikes like a dart on the person against whom it is directed. Thus certain animals like the snake, tiger, fox, and the peacock with the eyes in its tail are supposed to possess this power, and it has been suggested that the hare may have gained its disrepute from the prominence of its eyes.[1] In fact, recent investigations show that, as in the case of other popular beliefs, there may be some scientific basis for it. Dr. C. Russ has recently pointed out that the direct gaze or vision of some persons is so malevolent towards those at whom it is directed that it suggests that there is a ray or radiation proceeding from the human eye which produces an uncomfortable effect on the retina of the person at whom it is pointed, or that it causes this effect by collision with the other person's eye, necessitating the vision to be turned away, and he has invented an instrument by means of which he believes that this effect can be measured.[2]

Mikirs are said not to recognize the Evil Eye, but they think that a man with unusually keen and alarming eyes is possessed by a demon; but they do not avoid such persons, and the demon is supposed to confer cleverness on them.[3] Jains in Bombay think that care must be taken in cutting a child's umbilical cord, for if any of the blood enters the child's eyes their glance is sure to have a blasting or evil power.[4] In Bombay the

'blast of the Evil Eye is supposed to be a form of spirit possession. In Western India all witches and wizards are said to be, as a rule, evil-eyed. Of the rest those persons who are born under certain circumstances are believed to be evil-eyed. The circumstances are as follows: Among the Hindus it is believed that when a woman is pregnant she begins to conceive peculiar longings from the day of conception, or from the fifth month. They consist in eating various fruits and sweetmeats, in walking

[1] *E. R. E.* v. 610.
[2] *The Lancet*, 30 July 1921, pp. 222 ff.
[3] Stack, 29.
[4] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 93.

under deep shades, or in gardens where brooks gurgle, or in putting on rich clothes and ornaments, and in many other like things. If in the case of any woman these desires are not gratified, the child whom she gives birth to becomes weak and voracious, and is said to have an Evil Eye. If such a person sees a man or woman eat anything which he feels a longing for, the eater either vomits what he or she has eaten, or falls sick. By some it is believed that if a person comes from without at the time of dinner, and enters the house without washing his feet, the man who is eating becomes sick and vomits the food he has eaten, or does not feel longing for food for some time, until the blast of the Evil Eye is warded off.' [1]

Many people, like the Bhuiyas and Bhuiyārs of the United Provinces, believe that people born on a Saturday, under the influence of the unlucky Sani, have power to cast the Evil Eye.[2]

One method of avoiding the Evil Eye is to make on the person likely to be affected a mark which acts as a disguise or prophylactic. Many people with this object put lampblack on their children's eyes, a device which serves the practical purpose of protecting them from sun-glare. On the same principle a piece of charcoal is added to the basket in which food is sent to a worker in the fields, or by the confectioner to his sweets. An earthen pot smeared with streaks of black and white, fixed on the thatch, left in the court-yard, or fixed on a pole in the field, is a protection against demons and the Evil Eye, for both in popular belief are often confounded. Blackened rags are stuck on a wall while it is being built, a bit of food partially eaten is put in the house supplies, an animal's skull is stuck up on house or field, nails are driven into the door-posts or threshold, the nest of the Baya or weaver-bird, the skin of a hedgehog, or porcupines' quills are fixed near the doorway, the figure of the Churel is painted on a new house, or evil influences of all kinds are scared by throwing mustard seeds into the fire.[3]

Domestic animals, like horses and cattle, are protected by having beads round their necks, or by marking part of the harness with a single or double triangle,[4] by painting the horns of a cow or ox with vermilion. A bright-coloured rag or thread is woven into the hair of a horse's tail, and cowry shells, which

[1] Campbell, *Notes*, 207.
[2] Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 84, 97.
[3] Briggs, 162.
[4] See *E. R. E.* xii. 55.

are supposed to burst when the evil glance falls on them, are tied to it with pieces of red or white cloth. When a horse is eating, a duster is thrown over its withers, and a bit of turtle shell, a skull, or an iron ring are tied round an animal's legs or fixed on its horns.[1]

Children and women need special protection, though, as a rule, the latter are less liable to danger than males. Particularly at special crises, like marriage or child-birth, a woman is protected by marking her face with lampblack. Children with the same object are dressed in dirty clothes, and mothers in the Panjab, to save a child from the Evil Eye or spirits, will not wash a child's face till it is six years old.[2] Pretended change of sex, dressing a boy as a girl, is a favourite prophylactic. Actual change of sex is not uncommon in the belief of the lower culture and in the folk-tales. A tale is told of two Rājputs who planned a marriage alliance, but neither of them had a son, and one of them passed off his daughter as a boy. Complications naturally followed, but the father of the pretended boy one day saw his bitch jump into one of Devi's pools and her sex was changed. The lady followed her example and with the same happy result, and since then this Devi has become the goddess of the clan.[3] A like tale is told of another Rājput girl who was sacred and sent to the seraglio of the Emperor of Delhi. She escaped and took refuge in a Devi temple where she was changed into a boy. Others say that she was married in the guise of a boy, and in her despair tried to drown herself in the Jumna, but her sex was immediately changed and every one was satisfied.[4] Many cases of change of sex by bathing in Mansarovar lake are reported.[5] Among the eastern Lushais there is the custom of women dressing as men—one of them in one case marrying a girl, while men adopt the dress and customs of women.[6] Dhanwārs in the Central Provinces believe that sex is often changed in the process of transmigration, and they sometimes name their boys after women relatives and girls after men.[7]

Change of sex is often simulated in marriage rites, when it is not uncommon to dress the bridegroom as a girl, or vice versa,

[1] Briggs, 162 f.: see notes by W. Cockburn in *P. N. Q.* i. *passim*.
[2] Cf. *E. R. E.* v. 70 f.
[3] *B. G.* vii. 612.
[4] *A. S. R.* vii. 6.
[5] Enthoven, *Folk-lore, Gujarat*, 39, 42.
[6] *Ind. Ant.* xxxii. 413.
[7] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 500.

apparently with the object of avoiding fascination. Gaoli herdsmen in the Central Provinces dress the bridegroom in women's clothes when he goes to fetch his bride, and as an additional protection he carries a dagger or a nut-cracker, and the girl wears an iron bangle.[1] Abhīras, who follow the same occupation in Khāndesh, dress the bride in a man's turban and coat, seat her on a horse and parade her through the village, and at a Brahman wedding in Kanara the bride hides in the house and the groom has to find her, her place in the wedding hall being taken by a boy in female dress.[2] The same custom applies also to the relations of the pair. At a Modh Brahman wedding in Cutch the bridegroom's maternal uncle dresses like a Jhanda or strolling player, in women's clothes from head to foot, covering the male raiment beneath, rubs his face with vermilion and oil, goes armed with a sword to a place where two roads cross, and waits there while the pair make an offering of food to their caste or family goddess.[3]

In the earlier editions of this work it was suggested that these customs are analogous to the False Bride in European marriage rites, when similar disguises are worn, and this view is now generally accepted.[4] The same form of disguise appears in the case of the Shāhbāli, the boy who, dressed like him, accompanies the bridegroom during the wedding.[5] In the strange ritual of the Bharvāds of Gujarāt, who marry a number of couples simultaneously, an elderly man, for a consideration, starts by marrying a girl, and brings such ill luck on himself that he is supposed to die within six months, when his widowed bride finds her real mate.[6] When the Gond wedded pair go to worship their tribal godling after marriage they are preceded by two men carrying a chicken in a basket, known as the 'associate' of the couple, and doubtless intended to attract to itself the Evil Eye and other spirit dangers.[7]

Young men, who are very liable to fascination, protect themselves by tying a rag round their left arms, and wearing round

[1] Russell, *Chhindwara Gaz.* i. 75.
[2] *B. G.* vii. 53, xv, part i, 171.
[3] *Ibid.* v. 45 f.
[4] *Folk-lore*, iv. 146 ff.; Frazer, *G. B.* 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris', ii. 262 note; cf. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 165; *E. R. E.* x. 459; Thurston, *Notes*, 2 f.; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 520.
[5] Rose, *Gloss.* iii. 228.
[6] *B. G.* ix, part i, 273 f.
[7] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 75.

their necks a blue thread in which the blue feathers of the roller bird are fixed. They cover their shoulders with a gaudy coloured scarf, and pretend to limp or contort the face, grasping their ankles or elbows as if they feel pain. Persons who are obliged to appear before European magistrates, who are uncanny, inscrutable personages, cast their eyes on the ground as much through dread of fascination as by way of respect. When a man is copying a manuscript he will make an intentional blot or smudge the paper before the ink is dry, and the spots of gold leaf scattered over the writing paper used by wealthy people are as much protective as ornamental.[1]

A man's name is part of his personality, and the recital of those of his deity has special influence in a mystical religion, like the Bhagavata.[2] Fascination or the attack of evil spirits may be avoided by a change of name, or by keeping his true name secret and using another on ordinary occasions. In the Hindu sacred books it is laid down that a man should be as careful to conceal his age as his wealth, the real reason being that the knowledge of his age coupled with that of the sign of the zodiac under which he was born will give his enemies a chance of working black magic against him. Hence he conceals his real name and adopts another.[3] At a Harakantra marriage in Bombay the bride's maiden name is changed and she is given a new one; in fact, it is a general custom to abandon a wife's maiden name and to call her by some nickname.[4] All the Mughal emperors and other Musalmān kings had at least three names, and the custom still prevails among Rājput Rajas; the date of Akbar's birth was concealed, and he was given a new name at his circumcision.[5] Hindus are careful to keep their true name secret, and a Nāga is fined if he utters it; the moment a Lhota Nāga child is born the midwife calls it by some name different to that which is to be its real name, in order to deceive the evil spirits who are on the watch to hear it.[6] A Hindu woman will not name her husband.

[1] Cf. Ja'far Sharif, 52; Westermarck, 'The Magic Origin of Moorish Designs', *J. R. A. I.* xxxiv. 211 ff.

[2] *J. R. A. S.* 1910, p. 107.

[3] Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 198; *E. R. E.* ix. 166.

[4] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 64; Russell, *T. C.* i. 148.

[5] *B. G.* viii. 674 f.; Smith, *Akbar*, 18.

[6] Hodson, *Nagas*, 176; Russell, *T. C.* i. 110 ff.; Mills, 145.

Hideous or indecent figures are supposed to avert fascination, a belief which in some cases accounts for representations on some houses or on temples like that of the Nepalese at Benares.[1] In Nepāl such indecent figures are supposed to save houses from lightning.[2] In the same connexion, indecent language is said to be acceptable to some deities, and the prophylactic power of bad language accounts for some of the indecencies in word and deed at festivals like the Holi.[3]

In the Panjab hills, in order to avert the influence of a person who casts the Evil Eye, seven kinds of grain are mixed with cow-dung and smeared on the house door, with an appropriate spell; or the exorcist cooks a loaf, puts it on the head of the afflicted one, lights a lamp with ghi, recites spells, waves the loaf round his head, decapitates a fowl, waves the blood in the same way, and, finally, the loaf, lamp, vessel holding the blood, and the head of the victim are placed at night at the junction of four roads.[4] In the Central Provinces Bhātras mix gunpowder with water and apply it to the sufferer's eyes, the idea probably being that the fiery glance of the eye that struck him is quenched like the gunpowder, and Mahārs make of turmeric an image in human shape, throw it into boiling water, mentioning the name of any one whom they suspect, and, finally, at midnight, on a Wednesday or Sunday, place it upside down at the cross-roads with a shoe over it.[5]

Eating-time is a period of crisis when fascination or danger from evil spirits is specially dreaded. Food is sometimes protected, as confectioners do, by putting a lump of charcoal into it when it is exposed to view. Confarreation is a form of sacrament, uniting the groups by the sacramental consumption of food, and thus making them less likely to fascinate each other.[6] It is very dangerous to be watched when you are cooking or eating, and Europeans when in camp need to be cautious lest they intrude on their servants at such times, servants often pretending not to recognize their masters. Banjig Brahmans

[1] Greaves, 46 f.; Smith, *H. F. A.* 190; Rajendralala Mitra, i. 144; *E. R. E.* v. 612.
[2] D. Wright, 10 note.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 71: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 278 ff.; Westermarck, *H. H. M.* i. 417.
[4] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 211.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 275, iv. 140.
[6] Cf. Crawley, 150 ff.; Westermarck, *H. H. M.* i. 431.

and Lingāyats in Western India roof their wells so that the water may not be seen by the sun or by strangers, and they are careful not to let any one see their food or drink: in Khāndesh Lingāyats cook in the dark.[1] Prabhu clerks in the Deccan keep silence while eating, especially on Mondays in the month Sāwan (July–August), and on other feast-days; even children are prevented from asking for anything, and most men, if they chance to speak, dip their left middle finger into water, touch their eyelids with it, and then go on eating, but if a really pious person breaks the taboo he rises, washes, and eats no more till next day.[2]

Among substances which repel the Evil Eye and the assaults of demons iron takes a leading place. Sir W. Ridgeway attributes this belief to the early use of magnetic iron and to the fact that forging renders it more magnetic, and Sir J. Campbell suggested that the idea arose from the use of iron in cases of swooning and spirit seizures, in cautery and blood-letting.[3] Again, one day a thunderbolt struck a plantain tree and buried a ball in its trunk. One of the outcast Mahār caste found it and made a billhook out of it, and he discovered that it had the power of attacking any one who came to pilfer food placed in its charge. The general turned it into a sword, which gave him the victory over all his enemies.[4] But the truth seems to be that Bhūts are still in the Age of Stone, as some of the jungle tribes are or recently were, and that they dread a new-fangled material like iron, introduced by dangerous strangers, and possessed of death-dealing powers.[5] Up to a few years ago the Keriyas of Chota Nāgpur were in the habit of using axes and grubbers made of stone, and some survivals point in the same direction, as when Kachāris and Khāsis never use a steel implement in cutting the umbilical cord, employing hard, thin strips of bamboo for the purpose, and in Bengal to this day Hindus sever it with a piece of bamboo or an oyster shell, Musalmāns with a sharp bit of silver.[6] It has been suggested that the

[1] *B. G.* xv, part i, 175, xii. 62, xiii. 37; *J. A. S. B.* i. 126; G. H. Desai, *C. R.* i. 77.
[2] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 94.
[3] Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, i. 296; Campbell, *Notes*, 34.
[4] *B. G.* xv, part ii, 275 note.
[5] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 225 ff.; *E. R. E.* viii. 590.
[6] Ball, 91; Endle, 123 f.; Gait, *C. R.* Bengal, i. 480; Ja'far Sharīf, 22; cf. Exodus iv. 25; Joshua v. 2.

prophylactic power of iron accounts for its use in the great pillars at Old Delhi and Dhār,[1] but this is doubtful, and its 'sanctity' sometimes leads to its becoming taboo, as in the case of the Majahiyā Doms in the United Provinces who not only exclude from the brotherhood any one who commits a burglary with an iron jemmy, but say that his eyes will start out of his head.[2] It is perhaps for the same reason that the blacksmith is held in disrepute. Lhota Nāgas regard the trade as so unlucky that it is restricted to families which have long practised the craft; it is believed that no blacksmith lives long after he ceases to work, no house can be built on the site of an old forge, and pieces of dross brought from a forge into a house causes all the inmates to fall ill.[3] The blackness of the metal and the fact that the blacksmith is one of the old village menials perhaps contribute to the belief; at any rate he holds a position much lower than the goldsmith or workers in brass or copper, who use noble metals.

'Iron is constantly used as a charm at puberty, to bind a demon to a tree, after delivery, at funerals, marriages, as a cure for sprains. When Lingāyats set up a new door-frame in their houses an iron nail is driven into it to keep out demons. A former Raja of Vizianagram would not allow iron to be used in houses in his territory because its use would be invariably followed by small-pox or other epidemics.'[4]

The Agariya iron-smelters in Mirzapur and the United Provinces deify iron under the name of Lohāsura, and Kamār iron-workers venerate iron as their small-pox godling; at their chief festivals all iron implements are worshipped with offerings of flowers and incense, no iron tool being brought into use on that day; and the Gond deities are represented by pieces of iron.[5]

Iron is used in many forms as an amulet. In Bengal children are protected by fixing an iron ring round the left arm or leg, and iron which has been used for prisoners' fetters is particularly desirable for this purpose; Kols plant an arrow with an iron head pointing upwards near a baby's head, and leave it there for seven days.[6] Gāros believe that if a man carries an iron

[1] *J. R. A. S.* 1897, p. 12.
[2] Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 331.
[3] Mills, 42.
[4] Thurston, *Omens*, 256.
[5] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 8; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 6, iii. 99, 143, 328.
[6] Moberley, 246.

implement he is safe from Nawang, the demon who devours the souls of men on their way to purgatory, but sometimes the demon borrows it and can work his evil will after throwing it to a distance.[1] The person who lights the funeral pyre carries a piece of iron, a key, or a knife during the period of his impurity, and clerks in Bengal wear an iron ring on their fingers during mourning; all round the walls of the Shanvār palace at Poona iron chains were hung to ward off lightning and evil spirits; at the Srāddha or mind-rite for the dead the priest and chief mourner sit on low stools, an empty one being reserved for Vishnu; but these stools must have no nail or other iron in them, for iron frightens away not only bad but good spirits, and if there is any iron about the poor little Preta spirit cannot attend the rites; the young mother keeps beside her an iron rod and the pair of scissors used in cutting the umbilical cord; the bridegroom when he is going in procession sticks a needle in his turban, and iron vessels are given to a Brahman after a death.[2] If the bridegroom cannot get permission to carry a sword at his wedding he must do with one made of lath. The blacksmith's anvil is rolled into a tank to bring rain, and if any person dares to sit on one he will be punished for his contempt by an attack of boils. Prabhus in Bombay nail it on the threshold to scare evil spirits; several are to be seen fixed as charms to protect men and cattle on the Buland Darvāza at Fatehpur Sikri, and the holy horseshoe of the martyr is carried in procession by Musalmāns at the Muharram festival.[3] The horseshoe is as efficacious in India as elsewhere, partly because of its shape—a circle with a space through which the evil influence can escape—though a connexion has been traced between it and the Yoni symbol of productiveness; partly because it is made of iron and is associated with the crescent.[4]

There is a long series of legends connecting iron with the philosopher's stone and the transmutation of metals into gold. In one type of the story a man goes into the jungle to cut grass, and finding on his return that his sickle had become yellow, he consulted a blacksmith, who insisted on being led to the place

[1] Playfair, 82.
[2] *P. N. Q.* iii. 61; *B. G.* xviii, part i, 343; Stevenson, 5, 140, 174.
[3] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 72; Ja'far Sharif, 162; *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 93.
[4] Elworthy, 216 ff.

where the stone was, and presented it to the Raja Jai Singh Deva, noted for his good works. By the riches thus acquired the Raja built his fort, and at the request of the blacksmith many of the stones were shaped like an anvil. One day he held a festival on the banks of the Narbada, and as he had abandoned earthly affairs he gave the stone to a Brahman, but he through ignorance and meanness of soul despised the gift and to his eternal regret flung it into the river, whence he could never recover it, and this part of the river has never been fathomed to this day.[1] Another tale is told why certain Brahmans were expelled from caste. One of them found a pot in his garden and knew that it was gold transmuted by his Evil Eye. So he hung a piece on his door and waited till some pure-eyed person should be struck by the sight of gold, because no one else had power to overcome the Evil Eye of a Brahman. At last a tanner and his daughter passed by and the girl called to her father to look at the gold. The Brahman married her and was excommunicated. To procure restoration to caste he built a house with 125 rooms, and asked 125 of his caste-fellows to dine with him, and put each of them in a separate room. Each thought he was alone, but when he went to wash his hands after dinner he met all his comrades. So the whole party was excommunicated, and they now form a separate community.[2] There was a Raja in the Central Provinces who found this stone, and so prosperous did he become that he asked no rent from his tenants except the iron of their ploughs, which he turned forthwith into gold.[3] In Rajputana a man while ploughing accidently knocked his plough on a Pāraspatthar or philosopher's stone, and found that the share had turned into gold. He took the stone to the Raja, who by its means built the famous fort of Chitor.[4]

Gold and, in a less degree, silver are protectives. Jewels were probably amulets before they became ornaments, though the variety of such decorations is great in the lower culture. When a Hindu dies a leaf of the Tulasi or basil with a piece of silver or gold are placed in the mouth of the corpse to serve as a sort of viaticum or protective against evil spirits. Some people

[1] *Āīn-i-Akbari*, ii. 197; *B. G.* i, part i, 373, iv. 123 note.
[2] *B. G.* xxiii. 79 f.
[3] Grant, 395.
[4] Tod, iii. 1647.

prepare this beforehand by having a piece of gold fixed in the teeth; they say that it is good for a man to have it in his mouth when he dies, or to show that he is a true man because it is equivalent to taking an oath.[1] Bhotias carry to the cremation ground a bag containing gold, silver, or a pearl, which are placed in the mouth of the corpse and supposed to purify it.[2] The loading of infants with gold and silver jewellery is the main cause of the child murders which are often reported.

There has been much controversy whether the Ayas of the Vedas were copper, bronze, or iron.[3] The Copper Age is well marked in India, but there was no Age of Bronze, and Hindus consider all alloys impure and do not use them for religious purposes.[4] Metals used for cooking-pots rank in order: gold, copper, silver, brass, and, last of all, bell-metal, the last not capable of purification in the ordinary way, but requiring to be remoulded; temple vessels are usually of copper and brass, gold or silver being found only in the richest shrines.[5] A Jain woman when impure may not touch copper or bronze vessels, though she is allowed to use brass or crockery, but all are impure and require purification, bronze or copper by being passed through fire, brass with fire or more simply with ashes, crockery being washed in warm water.[6] The common brass Lota or water-pot is carried by mourners during the period of impurity as a protective, and copper rings are worn as an antidote to pimples and boils, and those of iron weaken the influence of the unlucky god, Sani or Saturn. His Evil Eye brings trouble at intervals of twenty-four years, all offerings made to him are black—sesamum, buffaloes, black beans, black salt—and only the Dakaut, the lowest class of Brahmans, will accept such offerings.[7]

Marine products are used as protectives. In Gujarāt a coral ring is worn to obviate the evil influence of the sun, possibly on

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 51 f., 131; Stevenson, 143; Dubois, 486.
[2] C. A. Sherring, *Notes*, 110.
[3] Schrader, 187 ff.; Macdonell-Keith, i. 31 f.
[4] Smith, *Oxford Hist.* 4; Rajendralala Mitra, i. 241.
[5] Dampier, *Brass and Copper Wares of N.W.P.* 2, 8; Stevenson, *Rites.*, 271 note.
[6] *E. R. E.* x. 494 f.
[7] Lal Behari Day, *Folk-tales*, 108 ff.; J. Wilson, ii. 174; Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 138.

account of its colour; in the Vedic ritual the mourners touch it as a means of purification, and it is commonly worn in the form of necklaces. The conch shell is used in waking the god in his temple and in summoning his worshippers, and in scaring demons and other evil influences from the offerings. Krishna plunged into the sea and slew the demon Panchajana, whose form was that of the conch shell; his horn, 'which fills the demon host with dismay, animates the vigour of the gods, and annihilates unrighteousness'.[1] In the ordinary shell the whorls turn from right to left, but when one is found with the whorls reversed it fetches an extravagant price, as it brings wealth and prosperity.[2] Many shells owe their virtues to their perforations, like the cowry which when worn as a protective has such sympathy with its wearer that it cracks when the Evil Eye falls on it. As the shell cannot grow in the earth, the sowing of shell-money at the gate of a captured city was a magical mode of causing the site to be barren for ever.[3]

Precious stones have similar value. In a special combination, the Nauratna or 'nine gems'—ruby for the Sun, pearl for the Moon, coral for Mars, emerald for Mercury, topaz for Jupiter, diamond for Venus, sapphire for Saturn, amethyst for Rāhu, and cat's eye for Ketu—they have special protective powers.[4] We meet in the folk-tales with the Naulākha, the necklace worth nine lakhs of rupees, which protects the wearer from danger, hunger, thirst, and death, and with jewels which give light and serve as lamps.[5] A tale is told of a saint who found at the Panna mine in Bundelkhand a diamond as large as a cart-wheel, and when the Raja claimed it the holy man announced that he could never find it and that it would never leave his dominions; but Musalmāns say that every diamond found there since is a piece of it.[6] The famous tale told in the *Second Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor*, which describes how he tied himself to the leg of the Rukh, was carried to the Valley of Diamonds, and was saved by clinging to a piece of meat carried off by the bird, is probably based on the custom of offering annual sacrifices to

[1] *Vishnu Purāna*, v. 21, transl. H. H. Wilson, 562.
[2] Farnell, *The Evolution of Religion*, 130 ff.
[3] *A. S. R.* 1902–3, p. 211; *B. G.* vii. 599 note.
[4] Dowson, 221; *J. R. A. I.* xxxvii. 155.
[5] Somadeva, i. 327, 478, ii. 368; Steel–Temple, 321.
[6] *A. S. R.* vii. 50.

propitiate the demons who guard treasures.[1] The Fīroza or turquoise and the onyx, Sulaimāni, 'Solomon's stone', also possess magical powers, the former, if put in the bathing-water of a patient, cures boils, and snakes do not approach a man who wears it; the latter is potent as an amulet, and Kunbis in the Central Provinces in cases of prolonged labour give a woman water in which it has been infused.[2]

Beads, partly on account of the material from which they are made, and partly from the fact that they are perforated, which suggests that they may be occupied by spirits, are valued as protective.[3] An ancient perforated stone implement was found hung round the neck as a cure for goitre in the Central Provinces.[4] Women wear necklaces of glass beads to protect their husbands and children from spirit danger, and Brahmans in the Deccan tie on the bride's neck the Mangalsūtra, or 'lucky thread', consisting of a gold ball and some black glass beads strung together by a dancing-girl, who is lucky because she can never become a widow.[5] Blue beads are specially valuable, and they are hung on the necks and pasterns of horses and on the necks of valuable cattle. Beads generally are made from substances potent in magic, and they are suspended on the necks of temple images or worn by the married pair to prevent abortion. Nuts of the *Putranjiva Roxburghii*, Putrajīva meaning 'giving life to sons', are hung round the necks of children to ward off disease attributed to the Evil Eye and evil spirits.[6] Some beads have special religious associations, like the Rudrāksha, 'Rudra-eyed', Rudra being the Vedic storm-god, some of whose functions have been taken over by Siva, and the five-grooved nuts of *Elaeocarpus ganitrus*, worn by Jogis and other Saiva mendicants. A nut of this variety with a single facet belonged to Kharak Singh, son of Mahārāja Ranjit Singh, the only one of the kind ever seen, but it has been lost; one with two facets can be worn only by a married Jogi; one with eleven is sacred to Siva and his consort Gauri, and is worn only by celibate Jogis.[7] Stones of the fruit of the Nīm tree (*Melia azadirachta*) are sacred to Sītala, the small-pox goddess,

[1] Burton, iv. 355 ff.; Mackenzie, i. 246; Yule, *Marco Polo*, ii. 296.
[2] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 53; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 29.
[3] Cf. *J. R. A. I.* xvii. 135 ff.
[4] Gordon, 75.
[5] *B. G.* xxii. 81.
[6] Watt, i. 420 ff.
[7] *P. N. Q.* ii. 93.

and are hung on doors during an epidemic. Vaishnavas wear beads made of the wood of the Tulasi or holy basil, sacred to the god. Rosaries have special magical power, and the number of the beads varies with the sect, Saivas usually having thirty-two or double that number, Vaishnavas a hundred and eight.[1] Women often wear as a protective a thumb-ring in which a piece of mirror is set; the form of magic known as the Magic Mirror, in which a child is made to stare into a drop of ink and announce what appears in it, is a practice more common among Musalmāns than Hindus.[2]

Blood is used as a means of purification from the influence of evil spirits. At Rajmahal in the Santal Parganas,

> 'if two men quarrel in their cups and blood be shed, when sober, judges are appointed, and the person who cut his antagonist is fined a hog or a fowl, the blood of which is sprinkled over the wounded person, to purify him, and to prevent his being possessed by a devil; . . . when a married man has been detected in committing fornication, his wife or wives may insist on a hog or a goat being sacrificed, to sprinkle the blood over him; being thus purified, it is believed that the ceremony expiates divine vengeance'.[3]

Khatris in the Panjab after a birth cut off a goat's ear with a sword, stain the child's forehead with the blood, and feast the brethren on the meat. Marāthas administer warmed goats' blood to cure piles, and in cases of typhus or of red discoloration of the skin the patient is cured by being rubbed with the blood of a cock; the blood of the big lizard cures snake-bite; blood is poured down the nose of a person attacked by a fit, and it is sprinkled on the threshold at the Dasahra festival, and on the threshing-floor before it is used.[4] Pahārias cure demoniacs by giving them buffalo blood to drink, and they hang up vessels full of wine and blood in order to expel the evil spirit which causes disease among men and cattle; Kos in Assam, on occasions of rejoicing, kill a bull or a gayāl, and their women and children drink the blood.[5] On the other hand, menstrual blood or that produced at child-birth is greatly dreaded, the former being generally attributed to congress with an animal or

[1] For full details see *E. R. E.* x. 847 ff.
[2] Ja'far Sharīf, 264 f.; Hartland, *L.P.* ii. 13 ff.
[3] *Asiatic Res.* iv. 87, 67 f.
[4] Campbell, *Notes*, 49 f.
[5] Dalton, 115, 270, 272.

with an evil spirit.[1] Cases of the blood covenant are not uncommon. At a Kāyasth wedding in Bengal, when the bride's nails are cut, a drop of blood is drawn from her finger and preserved in cotton soaked in red dye, and Kewats draw blood by scratching the bridegroom's right and the bride's left hand; the blood thus drawn is mixed with the food and each of the pair eats that with which the blood of the other was mingled.[2]

Incense, which seems to owe its efficacy to the theory that it is the blood of an animate or divine plant, is a protective.[3] The five-fold worship of the gods consists in marking the images, offering incense, a lamp, fruit and grain, and the waving of a light before them.[4] Jain Shimpis or tailors in Bombay purify mourners on the twelfth day after a death by sprinkling them with water and ashes of sandalwood, which is largely used in various rites by South Indian Musalmāns.[5] According to the orthodox ritual, before the corpse is laid on the pyre it is washed, dressed in clean clothes, and rubbed with perfumes—sandalwood, saffron, or aloes-wood—the intention being, partly, to remove the contagion of death, partly to please the dead, partly to repel demons, and in Gujarāt the pyre should be constructed of sandalwood, or at least a pound weight of it should be mixed with the other firewood.[6] Substances possessing a pungent taste or smell are used as protectives against the Evil Eye and evil spirits. Lhota Nāgas believe that ginger is specially obnoxious to evil spirits.[7] The fetid smell of garlic, apparently a late introduction as indicated by its name Mlechchhakanda, 'root of the barbarian', suggests its use as a protective against the Evil Eye and evil spirits. In the Deccan when a person is attacked by the evil spirit Munja, the ghost of a Brahman who has died after investiture with the sacred thread made of Munja grass,[8] and before his marriage, the exorcist crushes pieces of garlic near his ears, or squeezes the juice into his nostrils, a process which expels the spirit.[9] Children of Doms in the United Provinces who have been overlooked and pine away are cured by waving garlic and pepper-pods round their heads on a Tuesday, and throwing these

[1] Cf. Crawley, *The Idea of the Soul*, 191 ff. [2] Risley, *T. C.* i. 138, 449, 456.
[3] R. Smith, 426 f. [4] Stevenson, *Rites*, 300.
[5] Campbell, *Notes*, 232; Ja'far Sharif, 309 f., and see Index.
[6] Colebrooke, 98; Stevenson, *Rites*, 150. [7] Mills, 27, 34, 132.
[8] Manu, *Laws*, ii. 42. [9] Campbell, *Notes*, 90; *B. G.* ix, part i, 385.

things into the fire; Bhangi sweepers, in order to expel evil spirits at child-birth, burn bran, leather, cattle horns, or anything that gives a fetid smell.[1] Bharias in the Central Provinces, in order to drive away the Evil Eye, burn a mixture of chillies, salt, and millet, a compound that produces an evil odour.[2]

Saliva, like blood, is regarded as part of the personality, and is also a protective.[3] That of strangers is polluting, and a Snātaka or twice-born man who has completed his studentship is forbidden to tread on it.[4] Spittle, especially fasting spittle, which is less impure, is used to rub on wounds, to cure itch, or inflammation of the eye, and it guards children from the Evil Eye; spirits dread it, and in the Konkan when a person is affected by the Evil Eye salt and mustard seed are waved round his face, thrown into the fire, and he is told to spit and thus get rid of the danger.[5] Possibly because it is a sluggish animal, and on the principles of sympathetic magic, the saliva of a buffalo applied to a person's feet causes sleep.[6]

Salt, owing to its preservative power, exercises like effects. It is used in Oriental alchemy to effect the transmutation of metals and in Musalmān magic.[7] Abstinence from salt is sometimes prescribed, as in the case of Māl Pahāria mourners who may not eat salt for five days after a death.[8] In Western India the sister of the bridegroom sits near him and waves a cup of salt over his head to keep off the Evil Eye, and when he comes to fetch his bride his mother, as Brahmans explain, 'scatters salt as she walks, in order that any harshness or roughness in the bridegroom's temper may henceforth be dispersed'[9]—the characteristic way in which high-caste people account for practices of which they are half ashamed. Certain taboos apply to salt. If a person spills it he will have to pick up each grain with his eyelids in hell; hence it must be handled with the greatest care, and as it is unlucky to receive it in the hand it should be taken in a cloth or vessel.[10] The typical examples of aridity in Northern India are the salt plains, and sowing the site of a town with salt, which quickly melts and disappears,

[1] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 285, ii. 329.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 248.
[3] For details see *E. R. E.* xi. 100 ff.
[4] Manu, *Laws*, iv. 152.
[5] Campbell, *Notes*, 131.
[6] *P. N. Q.* iii. 26.
[7] Ja'far Sharif, 244.
[8] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 71.
[9] Desai, *C. R.* i. 167 f.; Stevenson, *Rites*, 72.
[10] Nelson, *Bilaspur Gaz.* i. 96.

destroys the luck of the place and scares away the good spirits who are quickly replaced by demons.[1]

We have met with many instances of the custom of waving things over the pair at a wedding, such as lights on a brass tray, grain, implements like a plough or rice-pounder or grindstone, with an erotic intent. The Chanwar or Chauri, a whisk made of a yak's tail, is waved to disperse evil, as the umbrella is waved over the head to protect it. The Chamār bridegroom's mother makes seven lamps of paste, places them in a winnowing-fan, waves them over her son's head, and throws the lamps away in seven directions to disperse the evil, finally waving her own sheet over his head.[2] Grain is often used in this way, and the throwing of rice, a very prolific kind of grain, is probably a fertility charm or a means of preventing the souls of the pair from escaping at this period of crisis.[3] Juāngs do not employ a priest at their weddings, but the Dehari or medicine-man sprinkles rice and turmeric on the heads of the pair.[4] Mahārs in Khandesh wave a coco-nut or a piece of bread round the groom's head; at a Parsi wedding the priests throw rice on the heads of the pair, and the wedding invitations are given by sending round rice dyed with turmeric; the Munda bridegroom throws three handfuls of rice on the bride's forehead; and at a Dhodia wedding in Bombay a man blows a horn, probably to scare evil spirits, and rubs the bodies of the pair from head to foot with grains of rice.[5]

Rice is never mentioned in the Rigveda, but it is frequently mentioned in the Atharvaveda and later writings, and its absence in the older poems is accounted for by the fact that it seems to be indigenous in Southern India; at the same time, its use in the Srāddha and the great number of its varieties may point to its use prior to the division of the so-called Aryan groups; but barley also came into use at a very ancient period, and wheat in its numerous forms became of equal, if not greater, importance.[6] Thus the order of use of the cultivated grains,

[1] *B. G.* i, part i, 164 note. [2] Briggs, 84, 163.

[3] Ja'far Sharīf, 74, 79; Westermarck, *H. H. M.* ii. 470 ff.; Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 34 ff. [4] Risley, *T. C.* i. 352.

[5] *B. G.* xii. 117; Russell, *T. C.* i. 295, ii. 230; Sarat Chandra Roy, 447; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 332.

[6] Macdonell–Keith, ii. 345; Watt, *Com. Prod.* 825; *E. R. E.* iv. 843; Schrader, 292 ff.

if not quite certain, must be regarded as prehistoric. Barley was in early times a holy grain, and its cultivation in the period of the Rigveda, though not fully proved, is probable.[1] When the gods are invited to attend the Srāddha the officiant takes barley in his hand and throws it in their direction; it is rubbed on the corpse and sprinkled on its head at cremation.[2] In the form of sheaves all the cultivated grains possess many powers. One is fixed on a pole in the threshing-floor to keep off the Evil Eye, and it is a common custom to keep a sheaf of the last year's harvest from which seed for the next sowing is taken, because it is supposed to embody the life of the corn.[3]

Til or black sesamum, the gingelly of Southern India, is associated with magic and the funeral rites. When the Sati approached the pyre she carried Til and Kusa grass in her hand. When making the water oblation at a cremation the mourner carried its flower in a water-jar; they form part of the Pinda, or food offering to the dead, and in the form of Tilanjali water and sesamum was offered to the spirits.[4] This association of blackness with the dead appears in the use of the Urad pulse (*Phaseolus mungo*). Halbas in the Central Provinces at the Akhti or Akhtij festival, which marks the beginning of the agricultural year, offer libations of water and Urad pulse to their deceased ancestors.[5]

In rites of protective magic colours play an important part. In Baroda the two safeguards against the Evil Eye are articles of iron and those of black colour.[6] Black is the colour of the animals offered to the chthonic powers. In the wedding rite the eyes of the pair are smeared with lampblack; a peasant hangs a black pot in his field as a protection; the Jain bridegroom wears a black silk thread round his ankle; at a Brahman wedding in Bijapur the girl's mother visits the house shrine and walks round the images, while her son holds a sword over the lamp she carries, and the soot thus formed is rubbed on the faces of the pair.[7]

[1] Macdonell–Keith, ii. 187.
[2] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 183; Colebrooke, 114; Schrader, 292; *J. R. A. S.* 1910, p. 91.
[3] Elliott, 274; Frazer, *G. B.* 'Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', i. 131 ff.
[4] Colebrooke, 70; Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 160; Monier-Williams, 296.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 195.
[6] Desai, *C. R.* i. 182.
[7] Campbell, *Notes*, 66; *B. G.* xxiii. 87.

Red and yellow, symbolical of fertility, are the marriage colours. It is unnecessary, as sometimes done, to connect in all cases the use of red with that of blood, as when part of the trousseau is always some red powder or spangles and cotton balls coloured red with lac dye;[1] but the smearing of the parting of the bride's hair with red, which she wears during her married life as a mark of coverture, is possibly connected with the Blood Covenant, in the primitive form of which, as we have seen,[2] the actual blood of the pair is mingled. Lhota Nāgas do not dye their thread red because the dyeing is said to cause dysentery, and it is suitable work only for old women who are of no value to the community.[3] Yellow, the colour of ripe grain, is lucky and connected with the cult of Gauri, the kindly Mother goddess. For this reason and because it is a 'sacred' plant the bride and bridegroom are anointed with turmeric. Turmeric is therefore 'sacred' or tabooed, while it is dangerous to grow, and any one who steals it, or garlic, will be born with six fingers in his next birth.[4] The habit of rubbing the corpse with turmeric, partly, perhaps, because death is conceived to be a marriage, partly to conciliate the spirit, or as a protective against demons, prevails among some of the menial castes.[5]

Various grasses possess magical and protective powers. The chief of these is the Kusa or Darbha (*Poa cynosuroides*), used in all ceremonies, sanctifying the ground on which it is spread, forming a bed for the dying, a seat for the gods, cleansing all it touches, purifying the impure; it is used to make a finger-ring in holy rites; bride and bridegroom hold a blade of it before their hands are joined, and before it is cut on the last day of Sāwan (July–August) sandalwood paste and flowers are offered to it.[6] Dūrva or Dūb (*Cynodon dactylon*), the best fodder grass, is also sacred, the favourite offering to Ganpati or Ganesa; the eighth of the dark fortnight of Bhādon (July-August) is sacred to it, and barren women drop water, flowers, vermilion, and rice on it in the hope of calming the spirits of the uneasy dead.[7] One of the rites after marriage is the

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 107 ff. [2] p. 291 above. [3] Mills, 37.
[4] Ja'far Sharif, 66; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 166.
[5] *B. G.* ix, part i, 315, 319, 324.
[6] Monier-Williams, 338; *B. G.* ix, part i, 384.
[7] *B. G.* ix, part i, 384.

Anavalobhana, 'non-longing', in which the husband sprinkles the juice of it into his wife's nose as a fertility charm, a custom also observed when a girl reaches puberty.[1]

Fruit trees and their products are also used as protectives, such as the mango and varieties of the sacred fig. Lemons are commonly used in this way. In Bombay the left cheek of the Kunbi bridegroom is touched with lampblack; he lays two betel leaves, a coco-nut, and a copper coin before the image of Māruti, the ape-godling, and walks round his image; he carries a dagger on the point of which a lemon is stuck.[2] The Sati on her way to the pyre used to carry a lemon in her hand; Musalmāns have adopted it as a protection from Hindus; the 'good' Bhagat or exorcist of the Banjāras is called 'lemon-cutter', a lemon speared on a knife being a powerful averter of evil spirits.[3]

In the lower culture of India and elsewhere tattooing seems a part in various magico-religious rites, and though its origin and the motives which suggest it are still to some extent obscure and may be based on more than one line of thought, one object is the protection of the person from the Evil Eye and the attacks of spirits.[4] In some cases it is purely decorative, the parts of the body tattooed being those exposed to view: the face, centre of the forehead, the space between the eyebrows, cheeks, and chin; the arms below the elbow, the backs of the hands and fingers, the chests, breasts, and neck; the feet below the ankles. Such marks may also be protective, when they represent symbols of the family or guardian deities. But in other cases they are curative, as tattooing over a tumour is supposed to relieve it, and on the belly to cure colic.[5] In the Central Provinces Gonds make a figure of a horse on the front of the thighs, and of a saddle between the knee and thigh behind, to represent Kodadeo, the horse godling, who can make the thighs as strong as those of a horse, and if they feel pain or weakness in those parts they worship him and offer a piece of saddle-cloth; or they

[1] Monier-Williams, 356; *B. G.* xviii, part i, 170.
[2] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 296 f.
[3] *J. R. A. S.* 1905, p. 364; Ja'far Sharif, Index, s.v. Lemon; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 179.
[4] Frazer, *Totemism*, iv. 197; Westermarck, *H. H. M.* i. 524; *E. R. E.* xii. 208 ff.; Rose, 'Female Tattooing in the Panjab', *Ind. Ant.* xxvi. 524.
[5] J. A. Dalal, *C. R.* i. 526 f.

mark each upper arm with the image of Hanumān, the ape-god, the type of strength, as it makes them able to carry weights; or they brand their joints with the burning wood of the Semal or cotton tree to make them supple for dancing; Halbas tattoo the afflicted joints to cure rheumatism.[1] In some cases a person is tattooed at a crisis in life, as when Halbas tattoo a girl before marriage, which is the general rule, and also when she goes home with her husband; if a child is slow in learning to walk they tattoo it on the loins.[2] In some cases, as among the Bhainas, women are tattooed with a figure of the sept totem, but as a rule among the peasantry tattooing is decadent. Some make marks on their ankles, known as Ghāt, or 'steps', which they think will help them to climb the mountain leading to heaven, and they believe that persons who do not possess such marks will be pierced with spears on their way up the ascent.[3] In Bengal tattooing is used as a cure for goitre.[4] Tattooing at a crisis in life is also found among the Orāons, who brand with a piece of burning cloth in five or six places on the left arm of a boy six or seven years old, when it is time for him to be transferred to the Bachelors' Hall.[5]

Kunbis brand a boy to start him as a cowherd when he is ten years old.[6] In the United Provinces a girl is not allowed to cook until she is tattooed with the representation of Sīta's kitchen, Sīta kī Rasoī, and in Bengal high-caste people will not drink from the hands of a girl who does not wear a star-shaped mark between her eyebrows.

In the central hill tract the customs vary. Juāngs, Orāons, and their kindred derived their marks from the Mundas; the Juāngs tattoo the forehead and temple, but they attach no meaning to the marks, practise no rite in producing them, and are ignorant of their origin; the Hos have adopted the arrow as their tribal emblem, and use it in signing documents, but among Mundas the marks are said to be purely decorative.[7] Assamese tribes practise little tattooing; Khāsis do not tattoo, and this is the case with both sexes of the western Nāgas, but some Mikir girls are tattooed on reaching puberty.[8]

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 126 f. [2] *Ibid.* iii. 200 f. [3] *Ibid.* ii. 233.
[4] Risley, *T. C.* i. 292. [5] Dehon, 153. [6] *B. G.* xi. 58.
[7] Dalton, 157, 161, 191; Sarat Chandra Roy, 369 f.
[8] Shakespear, 12; Gurdon, 21; Hutton, *Sema Nagas*, 10; Mills, 8.

Sometimes branding is believed to bring a person under the direct protection of a god, as the Vaishnavas brand themselves with the Chakra or quoit and the Sankha conch-shell, the emblems of Vishnu, and persons on pilgrimage get themselves branded at a holy place as a protective and a sign that they have visited the god.[1] It is also commonly believed that the tattoo is the only mark which women can take with them into the other world. Paramesvar, the Almighty, calls on them to show their marks in proof that they have lived on earth, and if they fail to do so they will not see their parents in the other world, but will be reborn as demons.[2] In the Central Provinces some women think that in the next world they can sell the ornaments tattooed on their bodies and live on the proceeds.[3]

On the whole, tattooing, except as a form of ornament, is in a state of decay. In some cases it may have been connected with totemism, but this has passed away, and now only some vague idea of protection from the Evil Eye and spirits or a sign of a change in life survive.

Leather, sometimes combined with the idea of castigation as a means of expelling demons, is held to be protective. The custom of throwing an old shoe after a bride has been interpreted as a means to help or protect her on her way to her new home by a magical act, or the shoe assists in preventing her contact with the ground, but the custom does not prevail in India because the shoe is connected with a shameful form of castigation, and its interpretation is doubtful.[4] When Gonds believe that a child has been overlooked they fetch a strip of leather from the house of a Chamār currier, make it into a little bag, fill it with scrapings from a clean piece of leather, and hang it from the child's neck.[5] In the Deccan a person troubled with nightmare sleeps with a shoe under his pillow, perhaps as a hint for the evil spirit to depart lest it may be beaten with it; an exorcist frightens the spirit by threatening to make it drink from a tanner's well, which would make it lose its caste; and Kunbis at Poona believe that if a witch drinks from the hands of a cobbler she loses her power.[6] Beriyas in the United Provinces

[1] Martin, *C. R.* i. 80.
[2] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 10, ii. 96, 113; Briggs, 145; *Ind. Ant.* xxxi. 298.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 386.
[4] Westermarck, *H. H. M.* ii. 541.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 103.
[6] Campbell, *Notes*, 105.

when a person is struck by the Evil Eye put some acacia thorns under a pot, wave a shoe over it, and call out, 'Evil glance! leave the sick man!', the rapidity with which the thorns burn and the danger that the spirit may be provoked by them perhaps contributing to the efficacy of the spell.[1] Shoe-beating deprives a man of his caste, unless he can plead *force majeure*, that it was inflicted by an official. The evil glance or the evil spirit may be trapped by physical means. Kandhs, when an epidemic of small-pox is feared, barricade the approaches to the village with thorns, dig ditches, and boil cauldrons of stinking oil; and many people hang a net over the door of the delivery room to entrap the glance or spirit, or to delay the entry of the spirit which must count every knot in it before it can intrude.[2]

Of some people, especially those who have something unusual or uncanny about them, those born by the foot presentation, the touch of the right foot cures lumbago.[3]

But the chief reliance is placed on charms and amulets, of which many examples have been already given.[4]

First comes the Mantra or spell, properly a Vedic text, but extended to all magical forms of words, letters, sounds, or any hocus-pocus, which bring good luck to the happy possessor of them and evil to his enemies, spirits, or casters of the Evil Eye. These are often inscribed on paper, the ink in which they are written is drunk,[5] or they are kept in metal cases or inscribed on metal or other talismans.

Next are natural objects—branches, leaves, fruit, or flowers of holy trees like the mango or fig, or those associated with some god, as the Tulasi or basil with Vishnu, or the Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) with Siva. Such things are hung over the house door or the road by which the cattle pass. People hang round children's necks the seeds of the Talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*) which is supposed to flower only once and then die, and the bursting of the spadix is accompanied by a loud explosion which gives it the name of Bajarbatta, 'that which bursts like

[1] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 247.
[2] Macpherson, 370; Thurston, *T. C.* vii. 425; Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', ii. 191.
[3] *P. N. Q.* i. 112; Ja'far Sharif, 265.
[4] Cf. *E. R. E.* iii. 441 ff.; Moberley, 223 ff.
[5] Ja'far Sharif, 187, 244, 251, 259.

a thunderbolt', and suggests that it cracks when any one casts an evil glance at the child. Gūjars in the Panjab use the wood of the Batkar tree (*Celtis australis, caucasica*), and hang it on the necks of men and animals.[1] Again, the claws, teeth, fat, moustaches, or the rudimentary clavicle in a tiger or leopard communicate courage and strength to the wearer, and the sportsman carefully counts the whiskers and claws of a tiger lest the coolies appropriate them. If the claws are used in an amulet the points must be turned outwards. Hair from the tail of an elephant, the 'pearl' band to be found in its forehead, and something of the same kind from its stomach are highly valued. The forest tribes hang the skulls and horns of animals killed in the chase, or those of the domesticated offered in sacrifice, on the roofs of houses, or imitations in wood take their place.[2] Village temples in Lāhul are decorated with a ram's head, the symbol of creative power.[3]

For the protection of children in Bengal consecrated sand and white mustard seed are scattered on the floor or on their beds: the mouth of a broken pitcher, an iron axe, a bamboo ladder to help evil spirits to escape, paddy, cactus thorns to bar their way, the skull or bones of a cow struck by lightning, the bones of a vulture, the skull of a bastard child, a kite's claws, and various roots are buried in the room.[4]

In order to enhance its power the amulet is often a combination of various protective substances. One found in the Panjab contained a piece of the umbilical cord in a metal case, a tiger's claw, two claws of the large horned owl with the points turned opposite ways and enclosed in metal, a white stone showing different colours according to the light in which it was placed, an Evil Eye destroyer in the shape of a jasper or white marble bead; these are necessaries for the charm, to which were added some crude gold ore, a whorled shell, an old copper coin, an iron ring, a cowry shell, ashes from the fire of a Jogi ascetic, and the five gums out of which incense is made. The owner admitted that it would have been improved by the inclusion of a Jantra or magic square.[5]

[1] *P. N. Q.* ii. 44.
[2] Gurdon, 35: Shakespear, 88, 90; Hutton, *Sema Nagas*, 40; Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 484.
[3] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 97.
[4] Moberley, 247.
[5] *P. N. Q.* ii. 23, iii. 186: cf. Ja'far Sharīf, 247 ff.

The equilateral triangle drawn on paper is hung round children's necks in a little broadcloth bag, and a figure in diamond shape is also approved as it contains two triangles face to face. Mādigas in Madras at marriages sacrifice a goat to the marriage pots, and the sacrificer dipping his hands in the blood impresses his palms on the walls of the room.[1] This looks like an early form of the practice of impressing the mark of the hand and spread fingers on the outside of a house near the door as a protection. It is common throughout the country, and Musalmāns may have adopted it from Hindus in the form of the Panja, said to represent the Panjtan or five holy ones.[2] Gāros at their great harvest festival mix flour with water and make hand-marks on the posts and walls of the house and on the backs of the guests.[3] The Sati in Rajputana when going to her death used to mark the walls of the fort gateway with her hands, and so late as 1879 General Hervey counted thirty of these marks at Bikaner, where they are held in great veneration.[4] At a Brahman wedding in Gujarāt bride and bridegroom dip their hands in the vermilion used in the rite and mark both door-posts of the house.[5] Pilgrims at a temple in the Central Provinces, as they offer prayer, make an impression of the hand, fingers upward, in vermilion, and if the prayer is fulfilled they return and make a second mark with the fingers downward.[6] Uchhla beggars in Poona District lay out food for the dead on the spot where death occurred, cover it with a basket, which is lifted off next morning, and if a palm-mark is found in the sand it means that the spirit has accepted the offering and will bless the family.[7] The marking of a signature by impressing the hand on a document is common, and it may be compared with the modern system of identification of criminals.[8]

One of the most powerful protectives is the magic circle, a line drawn round a person or thing which bars the entry of

[1] Thurston, *Notes*, 257.
[2] Ja'far Sharif, 10, 159, 193. Among Semites the hand was a euphemistic symbol of the phallus: *E. R. E.* x. 93.
[3] Playfair, 45.
[4] Hervey, i. 154, ii. 217 f.
[5] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 99; *B. G.* ix, part i, 46.
[6] Russell, *Damoh Gaz.* i. 184 f.
[7] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 473.
[8] Tod, i. 419, 452; Manucci, ii. 388. In Buddhist times it was a custom to verify a seal by the impression of the king's teeth: Smith, *Asoka*, 260.

malevolent spirits or other forms of evil.[1] It is a common practice to draw a line of milk round a place which contains valuable property like the threshing-floor and its corn. During epidemics in Gujarāt the exorcist disperses the disease by means of a scape animal, but before he enters the village he pours round it a mixture of milk and water, wet lentils and grain, and encircles it with a double cotton thread.[2] In Bengal a line representing a snake is drawn round a house, in the hope that this will prevent other snakes from entering it.[3] There are constant references in the folk-tales to the custom of drawing such lines round places which are taboo, as in the performance of rites of Black Magic, or to keep out witches and evil spirits.[4] The circle is also used as a means of recovering a debt, the debtor round which such a circle is drawn being unable to escape from it until he has satisfied his creditors, an ancient practice described by Marco Polo in Southern India and by Al-Edrisi in the twelfth century.[5] In Northern India this circle is known as Gururu, 'a round thing', or Gaurua, and a person who claims anything is made to stand inside it and swear that the disputed article is his property, or to take it from within the circle. In some cases the circle is made of calf's dung by a virgin, and a case is quoted of a man who swore a false oath in the circle that a person owed him money, whereupon soon after a wolf carried off his son, and though the boy was recovered by the villagers he remained under the curse of the Gaurua, and when he put his finger into a rat-hole he was bitten by a snake and died within the hour.[6]

The magical power of the circle appears also in the ring. In Kālidāsa's drama *Sakuntala* and in the folk-tales the missing wife and heir is recognized by a ring.[7] In a Kashmīr tale the merchant's son speaks to a magic ring, like that of Aladdin, and immediately a beautiful house and a lovely woman appear.[8] The marriage ring as a bond of union and a protective is used by the Mikirs, the lad's father, when the match is settled, leaving

[1] Cf. *E. R. E.* viii. 321 ff.
[2] *B. G.* ix, part i, 415.
[3] Gait, *C. R.* i. 195.
[4] Somadeva, i. 337, ii. 233, 358.
[5] *Marco Polo*, ii. 279 f.; *B. G.* vii. 599.
[6] Crooke, *Gloss.* s.v. Gururū; *N. I. N. Q.* i. 61.
[7] *Jātaka*, iv. 144; Somadeva, i. 142, ii. 73; Steel–Temple, 416.
[8] Knowles, 20 ff.

a betrothal ring or bracelet with the girl, and the Khāsi bridegroom or bride used to place his or her ring on the finger of the other; but this custom is rare at the present day.[1] During his morning prayers and at marriage the Brahman wears a ring of the sacred Kusa grass on the third finger of his right hand as a protective.[2] The woman's nose-ring, formerly worn only by those of high caste, in its hoop circle represents the sun, and a small segment at the base of the nose the moon; and red and white stones in front have respectively the same significance. It has a mystical connexion with the honour of the wearer; taking it off implies dishonour, and some women prevent it from being seen by veiling it with their head-cloths. It has been suggested that the custom of cutting off the nose of an unfaithful wife stands in the same category, as then she can no longer wear the ring, the symbol of married happiness. Widows are not allowed to wear it, and to speak of a lady's nose-ring is a breach of delicacy.[3]

The bracelet or necklace is even more closely connected with marriage than the ring. As a rule, a few days before marriage a piece of cloth containing various substances which possess magical protective power is tied round the bride's wrist, and this, guarding her during the crisis, is not removed until the rite is finished, the untying, doubtless based on the belief that the knot impedes consummation or convalescence after child-birth, being a formal act which is also practised by Musalmāns.[4] Brahmans tie up in the marriage bracelet the hard fruit of the Madana, a plant sacred to Kāma, god of love; 'its presence will save either of them from the ravages of passion during the next eight or ten days'; she may wear this fruit on her wrist three times during her life—at her wedding, when she conceives, and when she dies leaving her husband to mourn her.[5] Bauria brides in the Panjab wear a horsehair necklace on which gold or silver beads are threaded, which is known as Sohāg sūtra, 'the string of happy wifehood', until her husband's death,

[1] Stack, 17; Gurdon, 128.
[2] Colebrooke, 78; Anantha Krishna Iyer, ii. 186 f.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 524 f.; Tod, i. 502.
[4] Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 293 ff.; Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 110 f.; Ja'far Sharif, 82 f.
[5] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 65.

when it is burned with his corpse.[1] The Chamār wedding bracelet consists of chaff, rye, and anise seed bound with an iron ring in a piece of cloth coloured yellow with turmeric, and tied on the girl's right hand by a Brahman, and Manihār pedlars fix on her wrist-band a small purse containing mustard seed and a silver ring.[2]

Strings and knots serve as protection and have many magical powers. First come the Janeo or sacred cord worn by the twice-born classes, but the social restriction which confines the rite of initiation or Upanayana and the wearing of the cord to Brahmans is now becoming weaker, and no one is supposed to object if it is claimed by men of lower caste, the result being that many castes entitled to assume it now discard it on the most trifling pretexts, some Brahmans and Rājputs hanging it on a nail at night, or if one be not at hand doing without it for long periods.[3] In the case of a Brahman it should be made of tree-cotton, ninety-six times four fingers' breadth in length and spun by a virgin or a Brahman; for a Kshatriya ninety-five times, and made of hemp; for a Vaisya nine-four times, of wool. It is folded into three and again tripled and tied with a special knot, Brahmagranthi, 'that of Brahmā'.[4] According to another doctrine the Brahman's cord should be made of Munja grass (*Saccharum munja*), that of a Kshatriya should be a bow-string made of Mūrva hemp, that of a Vaisya of common hemp. But it is not improbable that the original cord was made out of some sacred or sacrificial animal, for some Brahmans still use or add to the cord a strip of antelope hide.[5] During auspicious rites the cord is worn hanging from the left shoulder, from the right shoulder when the rites are inauspicious, and wound round the neck or right ear when answering the calls of nature. If it happens to be broken the wearer should remain immovable until it can be replaced from the stock of spare cords kept in the house, but if the accident happens in the jungle he should tie on his scarf in the fashion of the cord and say the Gāyatri Mantra, which is to be repeated when the new cord is assumed.[6] At the initiation

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 77.
[2] Briggs, 75; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 193.
[3] Harikishan Kaul, i. 413 f.
[4] Manu, *Laws*, ii. 42.
[5] Macdonell–Keith, ii. 184; Anantha Krishna Iyer, ii. 206.
[6] Monier-Williams, 360 ff.; Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 33; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 756 f.; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 381.

of a boy Jains knot his scalp-lock, put the cord over his shoulder, and a string of the sacred Kusa grass round his waist.[1] The cord worn by a Brahman has acquired such virtue from contact with the wearer that Kunbis in the Central Provinces try to get a worn-out cord, fold it so as to hold a little lamp, and wave it over a sick person, but Brahmans take precautions to prevent this because they think that the virtue they have acquired by reciting the holy Gāyatri is thus transferred to another.[2] Similar to the Brahman's cord is the Kusti of the Parsis, the rite which and with the Sadra, or sheet typifying the coat of mail which resists the attacks of the Evil One, forms their rite of initiation. The cord is passed three times round the boy's waist, two knots are tied in front at the end of the second round, and two behind at the end of the third.[3]

In the same class is the Hindu Rākhi, 'protector', the thread tied on the wrist on a Sunday in the month Sāwan (July–August), the most unhealthy season of the year, when malarious fever, ascribed to spirit agency, is rife. This festival, known as Rakshabandhan, 'amulet-tying', should correspond with the Salono held at the full moon of the month, when Brahmans change their cords.[4] Rājput ladies send their amulets to their friends, the persons thus honoured becoming the Rakhiband-bhai, or adopted brother of the donor.[5] An expectant mother is invested with a similar thread in the fifth month of her pregnancy in order to ward off the Evil Eye, illness, and the spells of other jealous women.[6]

The string as a symbol of union is used in the marriage rites, and among Karans and Sudhas in Bengal the binding part of the ceremony being the laying of the bride's right hand in that of the bridegroom, and binding both their hands together with a piece of thread spun in a special way.[7] This rite is officially known as Pānigrahana, or Hathleva, 'hand seizing', and in the standard ritual the bridegroom grasps the bride's hand so as to include all her fingers in his own, as well as the thumb,

[1] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 86. [2] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 40.
[3] Dosabhai Framji, i. 168; *B. G.* ix, part ii, 231.
[4] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 307; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 382.
[5] Tod, i. 364 ff.; Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 609.
[6] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 113; *B. G.* ix, part i, 147.
[7] Risley, *T. C.* i. 425, ii. 267.

the latter held to be most important as it ensures the birth of a son, and thus he leads her round the holy fire.[1] Union, as we have seen,[2] is also produced by the confarreation or eating together which makes the bride a member of her husband's group, and Lepchas combine both rites, the pair interchanging the scarf tied round their necks, having rice sprinkled over them, eating together, and drinking out of the same cup.[3]

Knots are dangerous at critical seasons, particularly at child-birth, marriage, and death, because they hamper the act then in hand, check coition and fertility, and prevent the peaceable exit of the soul from the body.[4] A Kunbi girl in her courses unties the cotton thread binding her hair and lets it hang loose; the hair is never allowed to remain knotted at the time of delivery, for if the hair is bound so will also be the child.[5] It is possible that the habit of ascetics and holy men growing their hair long is based on a similar train of thought, or from regard to the danger of having it cut.[6]

The use of knots or knotted strings in protective magic is common. In Hoshangabad a thread, if possible knotted to a bit of some magical root, is worshipped by burning ghi before it, it is tied round the ankle as a remedy for fever, and a peacock's feather tied in the same way causes a wound to heal.[7] Wool is a sacred substance, strings made of it are used as protectives, and the Jogi ascetics wear a thread made from it.[8] In the Panjab piles are cured by tying a cotton thread of five colours —white, red, green, yellow, and black—round the great toe at night, and wearing it for a fortnight ending on a Tuesday, the day sacred to the protector Hanumān, the ape-godling.[9] The Rajput binds a root of the amardūb, the 'undying sacred grass', round the arm of his new-born son.[10]

To close this long catalogue of protectives against the Evil Eye and spirit-attacks, the veiling or covering of the face or head, both specially liable to danger, reinforced by sex jealousy, is one cause of origin of the Musalmān system of Parda. But

[1] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 85: cf. Westermarck, *H. H. M.* ii. 267.
[2] p. 282 *supra*.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 8.
[4] Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 293 ff.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 28; Gordon, 39; Ja'far Sharif, 83.
[6] Frazer, *G. B. op. cit.* 258 ff.
[7] Elliott, 278, 286.
[8] Crooke, *T. C.* iv. 95; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 9; Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 399.
[9] *P. N. Q.* ii. 205.
[10] Harikishan Kaul, i. 294 f.

it is not correct to say that it was borrowed from them by the Hindus, because it can be traced back as far as the epics and the Laws of Manu.[1] It extends to the bridegroom as well as the bride, the former wearing a crown, a cloth over his head, or a sort of veil made of beads which covers his face.[2] The heads of the Bhātia pair are covered with hoods made of the leaves of the date-palm; among the Dumāls they are blindfolded; Sānsig vagrants in the Panjab cover the bride with a basket on which the bridegroom sits while the rites are being performed.[3] While a Chitpāvan Brahman teaches his son the sacred Gāyatri both are covered with a shawl, and a girl at marriage has her head concealed under a piece of broadcloth.[4] During the Orāon marriage rite the cousins of the bride or bridegroom, according to the house in which it is performed, hold a screen round the pair and the officiant, so that they may be concealed from persons able to cast the Evil Eye and from evil spirits.[5]

[1] *Ibid.* [2] Ja'far Sharīf, 73; Brown-Russell, *Yeotmal Gaz.*
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 120; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 533; Ibbetson, 311.
[4] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 118, 128.
[5] Sarat Chandra Roy, 363; *J. R. A. S.* xxxiv. 211: cf. Westermarck, *H. H. M.* i. 311, 535.

XI

LUCK AND ILL LUCK; OMENS; DIVINATION

The peasant, under the influence of his religious beliefs and his physical environment, is constitutionally a pessimist. He is born with only a small share of good luck, which soon becomes exhausted, and he is always seeking in various ways to pierce behind the veil which shrouds his future destiny. This attempt at the outset, magical in relation to the Power or Powers behind Nature, is crude and elementary, surviving from the animistic stage into that of religion and the higher culture.[1] Thus he naturally mixes up the known and the unknown, the knowable and the unknowable, and invents a pseudo-science which he believes has its roots in actual experience, like his knowledge, often considerable and well-founded, of the weather and seasons in relation to his fields and herds. Its extension into the field of astrology, his study of omens depending on the objects or persons he meets at special times, the phenomena of the body or of external nature are in themselves valueless save in the confidence which the predictions of the astrologer, the interpreter of dreams or omens produce in his mind. The assurance that his action is regulated by some force outside himself often stimulates his energies and leads to success.

The attempts to get behind individual experience and speculate on the origin of divination in its many forms is not likely to meet with success. Thus, the theory of von Ihering that splanchnology, the practice of examining the entrails of victims, began with the Aryan invasion, when the new-comers tested the cattle of a new region in order to ascertain if the meat was healthy or the reverse; or that augury was prompted by the desire to obtain information about mountain passes and the courses of the great rivers, is mere guess-work, because such practices are found all over the world, and are not confined to the Aryan races.[2]

[1] Cf. Fowler, 192 ff.
[2] Von Ihering, *Evolution of the Aryan*, 364, 369, 374: cf. Fowler, 293 f.

The methods of divination, augury, or the interpretation of omens are so varied that it is possible here only to indicate some of the more interesting. The astrologer and diviner are well recognized in village life. The Hindu peasant consults the Pandit for lucky times for a marriage, the cultivation of his crops, or any other enterprise which he proposes to undertake. Almanacs and other treatises on the subject of luck are published at Brahman centres like Benares, and are hawked by pedlars round the village where they command a ready sale.

As examples of the methods employed by the more primitive tribes that of egg-breaking among the Khāsis may be noted. They use a board in the middle of which the experimenter puts an egg on a little pile of rice, takes it up and smears it with red earth previously laid before his seat, muttering incantations all the time. When these are finished and the spirits invoked he sweeps the rice off the board and dashes the egg on it with considerable force. A large portion of the shell, known as 'the boat', is made to fall in the middle, and according to fixed rules the position of the smaller fragments prognosticate either good or evil.[1]

Osteomancy, or divination from bones, was, according to one of the Arab historians of Sind, practised by the hill tribes of that Province: 'from certain indications on a fresh shoulder-blade they learn what they wish to know, and it comes to pass accordingly.[2] This method was in high repute among the Mongols, and it is still practised by one of the Baloch septs; it appears among the wilder tribes of Burma, who divine by scraping the thigh or wing bones of a cock or hen until holes appear in the bone; when the number of holes is equal on both sides that bone is selected, pieces of bamboo are stuck into the holes, and if they slant inwards the omen is unlucky, if outwards it is favourable.[3] In Manipur a fowl is killed and they watch the convulsive motions of its feet in the death agony: if the right foot comes over the left, all will be well.[4]

Rhabdomancy, divination by rods or wands, is described by Marco Polo as used to divine the result of a battle between

[1] Gurdon, 226 ff.: cf. Stack, 35; Mills, Introd. xxxiv, note 3.
[2] Elliot-Dowson, i. 331.
[3] *E. R. E.* iv. 787; Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 46 note; Scott-Hardiman, i, part i, 538.
[4] Hodson, *J. R. A. I.* xxxi. 307; *id.*, *Naga Tribes*, 112.

Chinghiz Khan and Prester John: two pieces of split cane were marked with the names of the two leaders, and the Christian astrologers by reading a psalm contrived that the cane bearing the name of Chinghiz Khan moved by itself and came on the top of that of his adversary.[1] In Manipur two men dressed in clean clothes sit opposite each other holding pieces of cane in their hands, and the direction in which the pieces turn decides the direction of the land to be cultivated; Tangkuls split a bamboo or cane suddenly, and if the fracture be regular, without any overlapping strands, the omen is good.[2] Both Angāmi and Lhota Nāgas take omens by dropping chips cut from a reed instead of by the fire-stick, like the Nāga tribes.[3] Two wise Kafir women foretell by divination the result of a raid:

'They stand opposite to one another, each holding two arrows in the palms of her hands. They approach one another and allow the free ends of the arrows to touch, whereupon, in a supernatural way, all the arrows shuffle together, and it is by noticing which arrow remains on top that they know whether the raiding party will be successful or the reverse.'[4]

Mikirs divine by placing unbroken grains of rice by fives or tens in pentacle or other fashion. They are counted by couples, and if the odd numbers predominate in the groups the omen is good. Or a long-handled dao-knife is held upright in the hand, a charm is recited, and it becomes inspired; when it is asked whether a patient will recover and the names of the gods which are possibly responsible for the illness are repeated, it shakes at the right answer or name. Or a woman feels the divine afflatus, yawns continually, and calls out the name and will of the gods.[5] With this may be compared the practice common in the northern plains: a Bhagat or priest of Devi becomes possessed and swings a lamp from a string made of human hair or from a cast-off Brahmanical cord, its motion determining the issue.[6] At the shrine of Pisharnāth near Matherān, Bombay, two stones are laid in a hollow in the chest of the image, and according as the right or left stone first falls from its place it is believed that the prayer of the worshipper will be granted or

[1] Marco Polo, i. 213 f., with Yule's note quoting parallels.
[2] Hodson, *J. R. A. I.* xxxi. 307; *id.*, *Naga Tribes*, 132 f.
[3] Mills, Introd. xiv.
[4] Robertson, 422 f.
[5] Stack, 34 f.
[6] Russell, *Bhandara Gaz.* i. 51.

denied.[1] The Thumonsi of the Sema Nāgas is a private practitioner who acts as intermediary between the people and the spirits. He sometimes is, or claims to be, a clairvoyant; he is a dreamer of dreams and skilled in the interpretation thereof, a curer of illness and a discoverer of stolen property.[2]

Augury is a special branch of divination. In the Deccan the Budbudkar or Budbudikē, members of the Koli caste, take their name from a little double-headed drum sounded by means of knotted strings attached on each side; before dawn they go to a grove and wake the birds by beating the drum or blowing a shrill-toned pipe. As the birds fly away they utter sounds which are interpreted to foretell what is going to happen within the next few days. The bird specially selected for this purpose is the spotted owlet, and its indication regarding people of various castes differs according to the tree from which its cry is heard.[3]

Sacred books are used in divination. When a doubt arose as to the month in which Guru Nānak, the founder of Sikhism, was born, the names of the months were written on two slips of paper, and an unlettered boy, who had previously bathed in the sacred tank, was called on to lift one of the papers laid before a copy of the Granth Sāhib or Sikh Scriptures, and he selected that on which the month Kārttik was inscribed, which was accepted as the correct date of the Guru's birth.[4] Musalmāns seek for a Fāl or omen by opening at random a copy of the Korān or the poems of Hāfiz.[5]

A favourite method used by Sikhs is to turn a little wooden hexagon, on each face of which certain letters are inscribed. Those which appear when it falls upwards are compared with a book of verses the first letters of which are here interpreted, and by this means it is ascertained whether the result of an enterprise will be lucky or unlucky.

Omens, particularly those of meeting, are closely studied, and

[1] *B. G.* xiv. 263; Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 40: cf. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity*, i. 136.
[2] Hutton, *Sema*, 232. For the magical detection of thieves see Ja'far Sharīf, 274 ff.
[3] *B. G.* xxi. 157 f.; Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 107; Thurston, *T. C.* i. 393.
[4] Macauliffe, i, Introd. lxxxv.
[5] Ja'far Sharīf, 29.

they vary from place to place and caste to caste. Tulasi Dās, in his *Rāmāyana*, describing good omens, writes:

'On the left side a blue-necked jay was picking up food as if to announce the very highest good fortune; on a fair field on the right were a crow and a mungoose in the sight of all; a woman was seen with a pitcher and child; a fox showed himself winding about, and in front a cow was suckling its calf; a herd of deer came out on the right; a Brahman's kite promised success; the nightingale perched on a tree to the left; a man was bearing curds and fish, and two learned Brahmans came with books in their hands.'[1]

It is very lucky to see a jay at the Dasahra festival; boys throw stones at it to make it fly, but take care not to injure it, and it is believed that all the jays in the country hide themselves on that day.[2] Dhangars in Bombay select a lucky day for a wedding by letting out a cow followed by her calf. If the calf when running to its mother passes by the right-hand side of the couple seated outside the hut, the omen is auspicious and the marriage takes place, but if the calf passes on the left the marriage is postponed for an hour or so, and the test is repeated.[3]

Morning is the time when the nervous system is at its highest point of tension and the imagination is most readily impressed. Hence the peasant takes anxious precautions that the first object he sees on waking may be auspicious. The Prabhu clerk in Bombay arranges that his first glance shall fall on a gold or diamond ring, a piece of sandalwood, a looking-glass, or a drum. He then rubs the fronts of his hands together, because in those dwell the gods Govinda-Krishna, Lakshmi, goddess of fortune, and Saraswati, patroness of learning. Then he bows to the ground, the home of Vishnu and Lakshmi, gets out of bed, laying his right foot first on the ground, and keeping his eyes closed, opening them only when he is sure to see what he wishes to see, finally saluting the household deities, the sun, the basil plant, the cow, his parents and his family priest.[4] The peasant takes care to keep his cow conveniently near his bed, so that he may see her on waking. The rules about lucky and unlucky

[1] Growse, 146.
[2] Broughton, 213; Crooke, 'The Dasahra, an Autumn Festival of the Hindu', *Folk-lore*, xxvi. 56 f.
[3] Mead-Macgregor, *C. R.* i. 253.
[4] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 105.

persons and objects are not always consistent, but it seems to be generally regarded as auspicious to see a sweeper removing filth, and a dancing-girl because she can never become a widow. A Teli or oil-maker is very inauspicious, probably because his work is dirty, and it is said that he crushes countless insects in his mill, and that he will have as bad a time in the next world as he gives to his ox in this. The same prejudice extends to the Dhobi or washerman because he deals with foul linen.

Criminal tribes are particularly careful in the matter of omens as their occupation is more than precarious. Baurias carry with them a few grains of wheat and millet and some seeds resembling those of the soap-nut, which they manipulate in deciding on a venture and determining the members of the gang which shall take part in it ; Mīnas use a piece of dried goat's tongue for the same purpose ; Pardhis think it unlucky when starting for a robbery to meet an empty pitcher, a dog flapping its ears, to hear cows bellowing—that of a bull is lucky—the mewing of a cat, the howl of a jackal, a sneeze, or to see a snake crossing the road from left to right—from right to left is good.[1] The Thugs had a code of rules which prescribed that before starting on an expedition a good omen must be heard on the right, followed by one on the left, but the direction varied on the march and when reaching their camp. The howl of a jackal heard during the day was always unlucky, and the expedition was abandoned, and any victim captured was released, because they revered the jackal as a devourer of the dead. Similar omens were taken from the lizard, the great Sāras crane, the partridge, the crow, the owlet, the hare, the squeaking of the last being so ominous that if not averted by sacrifice it meant ruin.[2]

Mystic qualities are ascribed to numbers for astrological or astronomical reasons, many of which are obscure.[3] Thus, on astronomical considerations 7, 12, 52, 84 are favourites, and odd numbers all over the world are lucky. It is a general rule that the bride should begin her married life only on the 1st, 3rd, 5th, or 7th year after marriage ; 5 is the number of the fingers, 7 of the days of the week, and both are lucky.[4] 5 is specially

[1] Kennedy, 186 f., 211, 265 f.
[2] Thornton, 75 ff. ; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 582 ff.
[3] *E. R. E.* ix. 407 ff.
[4] *Ibid.* ii. 25.

lucky; Hindus keep 5 images in their house chapel; it gives its name to the Panchāyat or caste council; when 5 Sikhs meet, their Guru is believed to be present among them, and there are 5 attributes of the true Sikh—the '5 Ks' as they are called—Kes, long hair; Khanda, the dagger, or Kripān, a small knife; Kangha, the comb; Kara, the iron bangle; Kachh, the breeches.[1] The lines of Khāsi menhirs generally consist of an uneven number of stones—3, 5, 7, 9.[2] In India, as well as in Europe, 13 is an unlucky number, and the reason usually assigned is that it is based on the intercalary month. But it has been urged that though the 13th month is known in the Rigveda, the examples of the belief in ill luck attaching to the number is not early in India; 'its elusive character, which is expressly asserted by the name given to the month, might have created a prejudice against it. But that this ever happened is not so far shown.' We must not dismiss the possibility that the idea, based in the West on the Last Supper, may have passed thence to India.[3]

In Nepāl executions always take place on the unlucky days, Tuesday or Saturday. The auspicious day for a marriage and for the departure of the bride to her new home are decided by the astrologer, but the seasons for marriage are generally based on practical consideration; the rainy season is the worst time for travelling, and hence it is barred for marriage; the spring is suitable because the winter harvest is then ripening and field work is slack. But other silly astrological explanations have been invented to account for these obvious facts and for the preference for and disapproval of certain months, as, for instance, that marriage in the rains is unlucky because at this time Vishnu sleeps.[4] Spring, again, is naturally selected because it is the time of joy, fertility, and fecundity. Some Kunbis, with the object of reducing marriage expenses, have adopted the rule of celebrating all the marriages in the caste or sub-caste at intervals of ten or twelve years, but astrologers evade this practical object by inventing what is called Sinhast kā Sāl, the year marking the twelve years' cycle when Jupiter is in

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 695. [2] Gurdon, 146.
[3] *J. R. A. S.* 1921, p. 351; *E. R. E.* ix. 413.
[4] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 59; Balaji Sitaram Kothari, 20 ff.

conjunction with Sinha or Leo, and they hold that in this year the Godāvari is specially sacred.[1] As the Mūl asterism is specially unlucky, so in the Central Provinces if a sweeper dies during the lunar conjunction known as Panchak, 'the fifth', four images of flour are buried with the dead man, because it is supposed that if this is not done four more deaths will occur in the family.[2]

There are many rules and much variance of usage about lucky and unlucky days for travelling and beginning other enterprises, and in such case much regard is paid to bodily functions like sneezing, yawning, the hiccup, the throbbing of the eye, or tingling of the ear, as in a tale of Somadeva when a man's right eye throbs as if for joy he is assured that he has met his mistress.[3]

Omens are often taking in selecting the site of a town or house and in starting the work of building. Before a Lhota Nāga begins to build a house he goes to the village dreamer, and according to the result of his prognostications he begins or abandons the work.[4] The site of the town of Dhārwār was selected because when the founder met a hare on the spot it turned and killed his dogs, thus showing that the air of the place promoted courage.[5] Ghasiyas in the United Provinces when selecting a site for a house make a burnt sacrifice to the Earth Mother, who may be disturbed by the digging of the foundations, and offer rice to their deceased ancestors; but if on the first night when they occupy the house they hear the call of a female jackal, they abandon it; but the Parihārs think that it is very lucky to hear a tiger roar on the first night.[6] Lhota Nāgas tell a story of a man who lost his sow, and when he found that she had littered under a big tree he decided that it was a sign of fertility, so he founded a village there and made the tree the holy tree of the community.[7]

Good or bad luck attaches to many persons and places. A town in Central India was named Nolai after its founder, but this proved to be such an unlucky name that it was changed to Barnagar, 'big town' or 'banyan town', and no one must utter the original

[1] *B. G.* ix, part i, 550. [2] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 221.
[3] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 239 ff.; Ja'far Sharīf, 278 ff.; Somadeva, ii. 128 f.
[4] Mills, 32. [5] *B. G.* xxii. 707. [6] *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 28.
[7] Mills, 5: for details see Crooke, 'The House in India from the point of view of Sociology and Folk-lore', *Folk-lore*, xxix. 128 ff.

name in the morning lest his food may disagree with him or he may get no breakfast; the same belief attaches to Jammu in Kashmīr which has uncanny associations with Yama, god of death, and Talwāra in the Panjab because Talwār means 'a sword'.[1] Raja Patni Mull erected many buildings and dug a great tank at Mathura, but if a stranger asks the name of the founder he will find difficulty in getting an answer, for the Raja's constitution was so delicate that his meals consisted of only a morsel of food, and if you name him the first thing in the morning, you may, like him, have to fast all day.[2] It is also risky to speak of fierce or dangerous animals in the morning, except under some euphemistic name, calling the ape 'Hanumā', or the 'tree-climber', the bear 'eater of white ants', and so on.[3] When he was out shooting one day General Sleeman asked his friend the Raja if they were likely to fall in with hares, calling them Khargosh, 'ass-eared'. 'Certainly not,' was the reply, 'if you begin by abusing them in this way. Call them Lambkana, "long-eared", and we shall get plenty.'[4] This idea extends to vermin. If you do not abuse your house rats they will not damage your goods.[5]

There are many ways of avoiding ill luck. If a Bhīl is persistently unlucky he makes one or two images of a man in the sand of the road, or of a man and a woman, throws grass over them, sets fire to the heap, and beats and abuses the images, which is supposed to 'kill the bad luck'.[6] If a Koli sees a bad omen he makes a circle round the place where he saw it, changes his shoes from one foot to the other, and goes his way, leaving the bad luck behind him.[7]

[1] Malcolm, i. 12 note; *P. N. Q.* i. 15, 87 f., 137; *N. I. N. Q.* i. 137, 207, ii. 28, iii. 18.
[2] Growse, *Mathura*, 137.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 70, 104, v. 133; Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 249 f.: cf. *Folk-lore*, viii. 285.
[4] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 376.
[5] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 15.
[6] *B. G.* xii. 87.
[7] *Ibid.* xvii. 292.

XII

THE WORSHIP OF MATERIAL OBJECTS

THE worship of material objects—the term Fetishism is to be avoided as it has a special connotation—prevails widely among the peasantry of Northern India, the root idea being that the object is occupied by some spirit, or in a still more primitive stage because it is something unusual and therefore uncanny. The worship of such things has, as might be expected, persisted from the earliest period, for in the Veda we meet with references to the worship of weapons and implements like the plough and ploughshare.[1]

The worship of stones is of special importance[2] because in the great alluvial plains a stone is an unusual and therefore uncanny object. In the pre-animistic stage we find 'the worship of a stone oddly shaped, of a jutting piece of rock, a huge boulder lying alone in the plain, a circle of stones, a peculiar mark on a hill-side or a hummock atop, an ancient carved pillar, a mile-stone unexpectedly set up where none was before, with strange hieroglyphics, a telegraph post, fossils with their shell-marks; in fact, any object of the kind that catches attention as being out of the common way'.[3] Strange forms of rocks become associated with legends, like that of the hero Lorik, Lurik, or Lārak, which is popular in the eastern districts of the United Provinces and in Bihār.[4] In the Mirzapur District, where a pass leads down to the valley of the Son, they show a split boulder bearing the mark of the hero's sword, and a water-worn rock, the petrified elephant of the barbarian king, the head of which Lorik cut off. In a later development the object becomes the home of a deity and receives worship as such. In the same neighbourhood the goddess Jiraya Bhavāni is worshipped, the sole representative of her in the cave which serves as her

[1] Macdonell, *V. M.* 154 f.: on fetishism see *E. R. E.* v. 894; Jevons, 166 ff.

[2] For details see *E. R. E.* xi. 871 ff.

[3] Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, i. 11 f.

[4] *J. A. S. B.* 1871, p. 141; Gait, *C. R. Bengal*, i. 197; Crooke, *T. C.* i. 55 f.

temple being an ancient, rust-eaten coat of mail, and, strange to say, this godling of the peasantry of the place, rude Kols and other jungle folk, takes her name from the Persian word *zirah*, which means a suit of chain-armour. Close by is a little stream, the Suariya, which naturally takes its name from the Hindu *sūar*, 'a pig', the hog river, and thus all the materials of a myth are ready to hand. A Musalmān trooper, girt with his armour, came sorely wounded to the banks of the stream, but when he heard its abominable name he preferred to die rather than taste the water named after the foul beast, for the pig was originally a 'holy' animal, and the idea of 'holiness' has merged into that of 'uncleanness'.[1] No one thinks that there is anything incongruous in worshipping a Musalmān's suit of armour as a representative of the Hindu Devi. When her cult prospers and is taken over by some Brahman he will doubtless find a more respectable origin for her title.

Nearly every village has a stone which for various reasons is held sacred. It may represent the embodied luck of the village, as in the case of the Panwār Rājputs in Oudh, who possess a large stone planted before the Raja's house which they believe to be the symbol of their right to the estate, that it was granted to them by an Empress of Delhi, who enjoined them to use it as a foundation for their settlement. When a new Raja succeeds he lays on it an offering of flowers, sweetmeats, and a few rupees.[2] Lhota Nāgas, when they found a new village, convey their Luck Stone to the new site, and this ensures good fortune in their new home.[3] Or, as among Gāros, some of these stones were sacrificial, and they place at the entrance of their villages several rough unhewn stones which are looked on with much reverence and may never be removed. When a village is removed to a new site the stones remain and the villagers return to it at an annual festival, when a priest sacrifices a victim and smears its blood on the stones. In some cases each of these stones appear to represent a special guardian spirit, but in other cases they have no distinguishing names. There are also stones set up in isolated places to mark a spot where a man has been killed in war or by an act

[1] Robertson-Smith, *Rel. Semites*, 448: cf. *E. R. E.* xii. 132 ff.
[2] Crooke, *T. C.* iv. 123.
[3] Mills, 6.

of revenge. Near each stone is planted a Mandal tree (*Erythrina indica*) or a plant of the Euphorbia cactus, but these stones, though seemingly very old, are not objects of worship or sacrifice.[1]

Unhewn stones are specially venerated, probably because the act of chiselling may disturb the indwelling spirit.[2] Some of the most famous Lingas are known as Swayambhu, 'existing spontaneously', because they are uncut and retain their primitive sanctity.

Many stones, again, like the Ashma stone,[3] are believed to be the abodes of the spirits of the dead. Chodhras in Baroda after the funeral send a relation of the deceased to fetch a stone from a river-bed. This is kept in the house and the Bhagat soothsayer is summoned. Under his supervision wine is poured on it, it is taken in procession with music to the place appointed for such stones, it is there half buried in the ground or left exposed, rice and wine are poured on it, a chicken is sacrificed on it, and a lamp fed with ghi is lighted upon it. Such stones are known as Khatra, a word which is possibly a corruption of Chhatri, the dome raised as a cenotaph, in contrast to the Pāliya or guardian stones which are usually carved. They are worshipped in Āsāwh (June–July) and when a Srāddha or memorial service for the dead is performed. On these days the people fast, the stone is smeared with cow-dung, milk is poured on it, it is painted with vermilion, and a lamp is lighted close by. The Bhagat mutters some words, makes small heaps of rice, and lays a betel-nut on each. He offers a coco-nut, sacrifices an animal—a cock or goat—takes out its liver, bakes it on a fire, and minces it. The worshippers, holding a pinch of rice in their hands, bow to the stone and drop over it pieces of the liver and country spirits. The fast is broken and the worshippers drink and eat the flesh of the victim, the Bhagat handing to them the coco-nut and betel-nut.[4] Instead of stones the Bharvād shepherds use in the rite small copper plates on which a human figure is engraved by the village goldsmith, and in other parts of Bombay such stones are called Vīr or 'hero' and are installed in the name of those who meet with accident or death.[5] In the Central

[1] Playfair, 96 f.
[2] See *Oriental Congress*, 1908, ii. 181.
[3] p. 234 above.
[4] J. A. Dalal, *C. R.* i. 503; *B. G.* ix, part i, 363, 407.
[5] *B. G.* ix, part i, 363; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 192.

Provinces the Baiga medicine-man makes a platform over the grave on which a stone known as Bhīri, another form of Vīr, is erected and worshipped by the relations in times of trouble. If it is necessary to bury a member of the family elsewhere the relatives go to the Bhīri of the great dead and transfer his spirit there to abide in their company.[1]

The special class of stones known as Pāliya, 'guardian', Khāmbiya, 'pillar', or Chira, 'graven stone', are erected in Western India to the memory of those who have died as the result of violence, of martyrs, of persons eminent for their holiness or other estimable qualities, and sometimes they commemorate a spirit-possessed man or an exorcist. Such spirits are likely to attack members of their family or their cattle until a stone is raised or a wooden figure in human shape, daubed with vermilion, is buried deep on the village boundary. Such stones are often placed under a Pīpal fig-tree, near the village tank, or on the place where the man was slain. If it is intended to represent a hero who died in defence of the village, on one side of the stone a figure is carved, armed with sword, shield, and dagger, and occasionally mounted on a horse or camel. Sometimes a man, woman, or the ape-godling Hanumān is depicted on the stone, or a limb lost or maimed is represented, and on the opposite side figures of the sun and moon, with the date and cause of his death, are inscribed. Such stones are periodically worshipped by smearing them with ghi and vermilion, by offering flowers, lights, and sacrificing a cock or goat. In particular, Koli married couples go to one of these stones, bow to it, and lay a copper-coin, a coco-nut, and rice beside it, or the bridegroom before he goes to fetch his bride bows before it, the spirit occupying the stone being supposed to grant fertility.[2] In Kāthiāwār these stones are found at the entrance of nearly every village, erected in honour of men and women of the Chāran tribe who performed Trāga or self-immolation to protect the village or recover its cattle from the predatory Kāthis and other enemies. On the stone the name of the victims, the date of their deaths, and the reason for the performance of Trāga were recorded, the men shown on horseback wounding themselves with sword or spear, and the women piercing their arms

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 83.

[2] *B. G.* ix, part i, 363 ff.

with knives.[1] When a Bhīl leader dies it is usual to open the grave two months after burial, and when the head is uncovered it is anointed with vermilion as in the case of the stone in which his spirit abides. After this anointment the deceased is worshipped and the grave is restored. This rite is said to be necessary to confirm the right of succession to his heirs.[2]

It is believed that the stability inherent in a stone is communicated to those who sit on it or touch it. In the Vedic age the bridegroom caused the bride to mount a stone, formally grasped her hand, and led her round the household fire.[3] In modern usage a stone, supposed to represent the goddess Pārvati or Devi, is erected in the marriage shed, the top of it is smeared with vermilion, and close by cloths filled with rice and wheat and two coco-nuts, all emblematical of fertility, are placed. The bride approaches the stone and touches it with her foot, or the bridegroom, stooping down, takes the bride's great toe in his hand and with it touches the stone. Up to this time the bride is not allowed to touch the 'sacred' vermilion.[4] At an Uriya wedding the groom sits on a flat stone from which the relatives of the bride do their best to upset him.[5] In the northern plains the stone is seldom used, but the bride knocks over a couple of piles of rice laid on the ground. On the same principle stones give confirmation to an oath. Shins in the Hindu Kush have a stone placed east of the village, and an oath taken or an engagement made over it is often held more binding than when the Korān is used: in several villages goats are still annually sacrificed beside the stone over which the blood is sprinkled.[6] In Manipur there is a heap of peculiarly shaped stones over which the Tangkul Nāgas take an oath which possesses great solemnity.[7] A legend of the Lhota Nāgas tells that the ancestors of their three phratries came out of a stone which was held sacred till an act of indecency committed by a man caused the virtue to leave it, and it used to be the custom to settle a quarrel between two groups by each side holding an egg over a holy stone and swearing that their claim was true.[8]

[1] *B. G.* ix, part i, 218 note, xvi. 647.
[2] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 63.
[3] Macdonell–Keith, i. 483 f.
[4] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 87.
[5] S. W. Rice, 49.
[6] Biddulph, 114 f.
[7] Hodson, *Nagas*, 110.
[8] Mills, 3, 103.

At a later stage the stone is held to embody some *numen*, the first step to idol worship. In Gujarāt Samadia Deo is a red-coloured stone planted under a Samri tree (*Prosopis spicigera*); Khetrpāl, the field guardian, is represented by a stone on which the image of a horse is carved; Vaitāldeo, the hill godling, is a round stone.[1] In Bengal a tale is told of a woman who found a white glittering stone in a tank. She took it home, and that night an old woman appeared to her in a dream and taught her how to worship it. It is now venerated as Didi Thakrūn, the Cholera Mother, both by Hindus and Musalmāns.[2] The luck of the Meithei State was symbolized by the great Nongsha or animal of the Sun, built of masonry to resemble stones, and there is another stone, jealously guarded, which gives strength to warriors, and on it no woman may look.[3] Throughout Central India stones are found, known as Moti Māta, 'Pearl Mother', Lālbāi Phūlbāi, 'Ruby Flower Lady', before which when cholera appears the Barva or Bhīl medicine-man offers the head of a goat, lemons, copper coins, or flowers in a potsherd. A small toy-cart is placed near the stone, and the formal expulsion of the disease spirit is performed by passing a Ratha or chariot and a goat to the next village.[4] Many of these stones, particularly in Kumaun, bear cup and ring markings. The habit of creeping under stones or passing through a pierced stone is common, the object being partly to secure purgation of sin, and partly to secure communion with the *numen* or spirit embodied in the stone.[5] One of the most famous of these stones is the Srigundi, 'the lucky holed stone', believed to be a Yoni or symbol of the female energy, through which pilgrims pass to cleanse their sins. Sivāji performed this rite to purge himself of the murder of Afzal Khan, and other Marātha Peshwas followed his example.[6] At Dabhoi in Gujarāt a slab fixed on a Musalmān tomb discriminates between thieves and honest men; the stoutest person, if unjustly charged with theft, can pass through it, but the thinnest rogue will be held fast in the crevice, and a tree on another saint's tomb forms a loop with its intertwining branches which holds fast the guilty and allows the innocent to pass.[7]

[1] *B. G.* ix, part i, 292: cf. Whitehead, 105 ff.
[2] Gait, *C. R.* i. 194.
[3] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 102.
[4] Luard, *C. R.* i. 78: on disease expulsion see p. 126 above.
[5] *E. R. E.* vi. 716.
[6] Edwardes, iii. 360 f.
[7] *B. G.* vi. 168, vii. 548.

Many of these holy stones became specialized in the cults of the greater gods, like the Linga and Yoni, both sexual symbols, the former possibly originating in the cone or pyramid, as in the cult of Aphrodite, both associated with cults of fertility, those of Siva and his consort Devi or Sakti, but their attribution to the influence of non-Aryan tribes, Dravidians or Mon-Khmers, is probably incorrect.[1] In the same way the Sālagrāma ammonite, which seems to take its name from a place, 'village of the Sāl tree' (*Shorea robusta*), is used by the followers of Vishnu.[2] The Meitheis, in one of their temples, venerate a rough black stone, apparently unwrought, as Durga the Mother goddess, which may be analogous to the rough stones representing the Earth Mother, solemnly purified after the period of menstruation which she is supposed to undergo; and in Baroda Gohāmāya Mādi, the Mother goddess, is a huge boulder which has fallen from the top of a hill.[3] On some of the piles of stones which are the abode of the village godlings prehistoric stone implements, popularly believed to be thunderbolts, have been recognized. The Khyens of Assam, when a tree is struck by lightning, search for the thunderbolt, and any likely stone is accepted as such, made over to the priest, and 'held sacred and sacrificed to as something given from heaven'.[4] The strangeness and uncanny appearance of any stone is quite sufficient to account for the veneration paid to it. The Pātra or stone begging-bowl which Buddha is said to have used is one of the most famous relics. Its fate is uncertain, for like many things of the kind it is shown at more than one place, at a Vihāra at Kandy in Ceylon, the Buddhist pilgrim found it at Vaisāli in Bihar, and Musalmāns now reverence it at Kandahār.[5]

In the same class are the marks on stones regarded as the footprints of deities or saints. Those of Buddha were shown to the Chinese pilgrims, and with much of Buddhist belief and ritual passed into the cult of Vishnu, whose footprints, the

[1] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 344; *E. R. E.* iv. 363 ff., ix. 819; Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, 165; *J. R. A. S.* 1907, p. 337 ff.
[2] Thurston, *T. C.* i. 323 ff.; *N. I. N. Q.* i. 182.
[3] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 102; Gait, *C. R.* i. 181; J. A. Dalal, *C. R.* i. 156.
[4] Dalton, 115.
[5] Yule, *Marco Polo*, ii. 264; Beal, i, Introd. lxxxviii, ii. 74, 129 f.; *J. R. A. S.* 1907, p. 345.

Hari kā Charan, are especially revered at a temple of that name at Gaya.[1] The worship of the footprints of Buddha appears on the stupa of Bharhut and at Samkann.[2] In Chamba in the Panjab the Pāduke or footprint pillars, a pile of stones covered with a slab on which is a Trisūl or trident with a footmark on each side, are shown; and at the Chhatri or cenotaphs the footprint of the deceased is often carved in stone.[3] Some modern sects, like the Apadān of Baroda, worship the footprints of their founder, and at a temple at Mālvan in Ratnagiri District, prints of the hands and feet of Sivāji are held in reverence and protected by small domes.[4] Footprints of a cow and of the horse of the godling Khandoba are revered in the same way.[5] At Nāsik the representation of the footprints of Rama are placed in a litter and carried round his temple, and Musalmāns have adopted the veneration of the Qadam-i-Rasūl or footprints of the Prophet from the lower animism.[6] In these representations of the footprints of deities and saints the lucky marks which they bear receive special attention.[7]

Certain stones are venerated on account of their perforations which suggest the abode of spirits, like the Sālagrāma, in which they are said to be the work of the Vajrakīta or 'thunderbolt insect'.[8] The fossils found on the hill where the shrine of Khwāja Shaikh Farīd at Girnar in Wardha District stands are supposed to be the stock-in-trade of a party of merchants who mocked the saint, whereupon he turned their wares into stones.[9] An Angāmi Nāga village boasts the possession of a pair of stones, male and female, that breed annually and produce offspring.[10]

Among wrought stones the grindstone is naturally a symbol of fertility, and as such it is used in the marriage and birth rites. At the Kunbi birth rites the child's grandmother or another matron of family makes an image of their patron goddess with rice flour, sets it on a grindstone and worships it; Orāons make bride and bridegroom stand on a curry-stone, under which,

[1] Monier-Williams, 310.
[2] Sir A. Cunningham, 112; Grünwedel, 71 f.
[3] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 434, 855.
[4] J. A. Dalal, *C. R.* i. 143; *B. G.* x. 350.
[5] *B. G.* xiv. 382, xviii, part iii, 135.
[6] *B. G.* xvi. 518; Ja'far Sharīf, 188 f.
[7] *J. R. A. S.* 1910, 87 ff.: cf. the Charanamrita, p. 224 above.
[8] Cf. Man, iii. 17 ff.
[9] Russell, *Wardha Gaz.* i. 27 f.; Grant, 197 f.
[10] Hutton, *Angami*, 115.

to add potency to the charm, a sheaf of corn resting on a plough-yoke is placed; at a Kunbi wedding the barber places a cloth on the grindstone and lays grains of rice before it; Basors in the Central Provinces, who venerate it, worship the grindstone when they are eating the wedding cakes.[1] At a Koli wedding in Poona the groom sits on a grindstone in the middle of the marriage square, which acts as a protective, and while women sing he is bathed; after the Rāmoshi pair have been anointed the women of the house dye a cloth and a few grains of millet with turmeric, take a sprouting, 'child-bearing' root of turmeric, tie it in a cloth and fasten it round the pivot of a stone hand-mill, with which five married women grind turmeric, wheat, and millet, and cook the wedding cakes from the flour.[2] The grindstone is used also in magical divination. When Orāons are selecting a priest a grindstone is set rolling through the village, and the man at whose door it stops is appointed.[3]

In the stoneless northern plains poles or posts often take the place of stones in religious rites. Mālīs in Bengal worship the main pillars of the house under the name of Gumo Gosāin; in the Central Provinces the Five Brothers who cause disease are represented by images roughly carved on posts, and Bīrnāth, the Ahīr cattle-godling, is represented by a post.[4]

The plough and its share symbolize fertility and are invoked in the Rigveda.[5] In Northern India the Harpūja, or worship of the plough, takes place on the day which closes the season of ploughing and sowing. This is generally done when the winter crops are sown in the month Kārttik (October–November), but in some places it is also done when the autumn crops are sown in Sāvan (July–August), when the plough is washed and decorated with garlands, and to use it or lend it after this day is deemed unlucky. It is also the custom in some places to decorate it at the Halaita festival, the opening of the season.[6] At a wedding of Kunbis and Bhātias in Bombay the bride's mother shows the groom a small model of a plough, and an arrow and churn-handle, at the same time pulling his nose,

[1] *B. G.* xi. 56, xviii, part i, 304; Russell, *T. C.* i. 149.
[2] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 319, 417: cf. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, 207 f.
[3] Dehon, 138.
[4] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 58; Hislop, 25; Crooke, *T. C.* i. 63 f.
[5] Macdonell, *V. M.* 155.
[6] Elliot, *Gloss.* 475 f.

possibly to expel evil.[1] Chamārs in the United Provinces sometimes plant five ploughs in the ground to form supports for the wedding shed, and at a Pāsi wedding in the Central Provinces the pair walk round the heavy wooden log dragged over the fields to crush the clods.[2] In Bengal at sowing time the Kochh propitiate Balabhadra Thākur, brother of Krishna, a godling of cultivation, under the form of a yoked plough, before which the worshippers do homage, and Musahars at the worship of the Bīrs or 'heroes', the malignant spirits of the dead, fix a plough-shaft and a stake in the ground, hang sword-blades to them, on which their Bhakats or devotees do acrobatic exercises.[3] Brahmans in Gujarāt after a birth dig a hole with a piece of the iron-work of a plough and bury the after-birth; if a householder does not own a plough he borrows one, and it is so important to keep it in the house that, however much the owner wants it, it will not be returned for six days.[4] Though Orāons do not use ploughs in rain-making, to avert epidemics, or for other magical purposes, worn-out ploughs are fixed in the ground to serve as seats for the spirits; as we have seen, the plough is used by them as a fertility charm at marriage;[5] and a model of a ploughshare is set up as an altar to represent their godling Darha, and it is renewed every third year.[6]

The winnowing-fan or scoop is often used in magical rites.[7] The Ojha in Bengal divines by shaking rice in it in order to decide which evil spirit or witch has caused an illness.[8] In the Orāon rite for procuring abundant rain and good crops all the village families heap rice in a winnowing-basket which the Patāri priest carries in procession, dropping the grain all along the road, while his assistant scatters water from a pitcher to which a tube is attached.[9] Mundas and Orāons use it to ascertain the will of the gods in matters such as the appointment of a priest, by rolling it along until it stops at the door of the person who is selected,[10] and it is his symbol of his sacred

[1] Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 141, ii. 139. [2] Briggs, 78; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 383.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* i. 498, ii. 117. [4] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 5.
[5] p. 245 above. [6] Sarat Chandra Roy, 151; Dalton, 252, 258.
[7] Miss Harrison, 527 ff.; Westermarck, *M. I.* ii. 467, 479; *E. R. E.* v. 754 ff., xi. 506 f.
[8] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 208. [9] *J. R. A. I.* xliv. 330.
[10] Sarat Chandra Roy, *Mundas*, App. xxx, note; *id.*, *Orāons*, 112; Dehon, 138; *E. R. E.* ix. 506.

office. It is a common practice to put a new-born baby in it with leaves of the lime and betel, and to remove it outside the house and fling the leaves away to carry bad luck with them, or it is set up in the delivery-room with five leaves of the Rui plant (*Calotropis gigantea*) on which are drawn figures of Chhathi, the birth spirit.[1] Brahmans in Gujarāt on the tenth day after a birth lay a boy child on a slate so that he may become a learned man, but a girl is placed on a winnowing-fan, 'that she may grow up clever in domestic ways, of which cleaning the grain is one of the most important', a characteristic Brahman interpretation of the primitive rite.[2] Early in the morning of the Dīvāli, or Feast of Lights, the housewife takes a sieve and a broom, beats them together in every part of the house, and says, 'God abide and Poverty depart!' The sieve is then carried outside the village and thrown away. If any one afflicted with a disease of the blood can get hold of one of these sieves he will be cured.[3]

At marriages it is usual while the pair make the prescribed revolutions for the bridegroom to hold a fan into which the bride's brother pours a little parched rice as the pair go round, and this the bride sprinkles on the ground to secure fertility.[4] When Prabhus in Bombay end the worship of their Mother goddess, Gauri, by flinging her image into water, probably as a rain-charm, the image is laid on a winnowing-fan which a servant, without looking back, takes to a river or tank and flings both into the water.[5]

The broom derives its sanctity from its use in purification and the expulsion of evil spirits.[6] A Jain should avert the possible inflow of Karma by carefully dusting all his books with the Ponjani, or small brush, a smaller form of the brush from which no Sādhu or ascetic must part, and he must scrupulously sweep the hearth and the wood he intends to burn lest animal life may be destroyed; the Sādhu's Oghi or brush is shaped like a fly-whisk, consisting of about two thousand spools

[1] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 148; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 86.
[2] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 12.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 40; Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 265; *B. G.* xviii, part i, 252 f.
[4] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 129.
[5] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 248: cf. Balaji Sitaram Kothari, 44 ff.
[6] *Folk-lore*, xxx. 169 ff.

of wool sewn to a piece of cloth and bound to a staff of sandal-wood, blackwood, or teak about fifteen inches long; while walking he carries it under his left armpit, and uses it for sweeping the ground.[1] Parsis in their rite use the Barsom, a bundle of metal wires, a substitute for the twigs of a plant formerly used for this purpose.[2] The use of the broom to expel evil spirits is illustrated by the custom of the Berias and Dhānuks of the United Provinces, whose exorcist waves it over a patient supposed to be suffering from disease caused by evil spirits.[3] It is dangerous to step over a fallen broom. To do so causes suffering to a woman in labour, and in the Panjab a Chuhra sweeper never steps over a broom, the symbol of his calling; that used on the threshing-floor is kept hung by a nail on the house wall, and that employed in ordinary use is laid on the grass after a death, but never left standing upright.[4] Mahār outcasts in the Central Provinces so dread the effect of an enemy writing their names on a piece of paper and tying it to a sweeper's broom that a threat to do so is used with great effect by their creditors.[5] Beni Israil Jews in Bombay direct that when the midwife draws off the Evil Eye from a child she must hold in her hand a shoe, a winnowing fan, and a broom.[6]

The pestle and mortar and the pounder with which rice is husked have a phallic and fertilizing significance, and are therefore used in marriage rites. During a Chamār's wedding seven women of the family husk the rice intended to be used in the ceremony, each of them using a pounder on which cotton threads, coloured red and yellow, the marriage colours, are wound.[7] The mother of a Bhuiyār bride in Mirzapur waves a pestle five times from left to right and five times from right to left round the head of the groom and scatters cotton with its seeds over him.[8] The Munda bridegroom is bathed by five women who sprinkle water over him, brandish a pestle, and say, 'If you prove to be covetous or a thief, you will be beaten like this!'[9] At a Banjāra wedding in the Central Provinces the pair make

[1] Mrs. Stevenson, *Jainism*, 146; *B. G.* ix, part i, 107.
[2] Dosabhai Framji, ii. 167; Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis*, 397 ff.
[3] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 247, ii. 274.
[4] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 207; *P. N. Q.* iv. 28.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 139 f.
[6] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 526 note.
[7] Briggs, 81.
[8] Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 91, 110.
[9] Sarat Chandra Roy, 445.

their seven turns round two rice pestles, and at a Kunbi marriage in Bombay a betel leaf, a millet stalk, and a needle are fixed to the pestle before which the boy is seated while women drop oil from mango leaves over him.[1]

Implements and tools are venerated, 'the earliest phase or type of the tendency which later on leads those of one guild, or of the same walk in life to support and cultivate one god, who is elected, in lieu of individual tool-fetishes melted down, to preside over their craft or trade interests'.[2]

A good example is found in the sacred pickaxe of the Thugs. A lucky day was selected for forging it; this was done in secret, care was taken that the shadow of no living thing should fall on it. The person appointed to venerate it sat facing the west and received it in a brass dish. It was washed with water in a pit prepared for the purpose, then with sugar and water, milk and wine in succession. It was marked from head to point with seven spots of vermilion, and then replaced on the brass dish with a coco-nut, cloves, white sandalwood, and sugar. A fire was lighted with wood of the mango and Ber tree (*Zizyphus jujuba*), and all the articles in the tray, except the coco-nut, were thrown on it. When the flame rose the priest passed the pickaxe seven times through it. The coco-nut was stripped of its outer coat and laid on the ground. The priest holding the pickaxe in his hand said, 'Shall I strike?' and when the bystanders assented he broke the coco-nut with the butt end of the pickaxe, exclaiming, 'All hail, mighty Devi, Mother of all!' This was an important part of the rite, because if the coco-nut was not broken with a single blow all the labour was thrown away, a rule often followed in the case of animal sacrifice. The shell and some of the kernel of the nut were thrown into the fire, and the pickaxe, carefully wrapped in white cloth, was placed on the ground to the west and all members of the gang present prostrated themselves before it. On a journey it was buried in the ground at each halting-place, or thrown into a well, out of which, it was believed, it came up of itself, if summoned in due form. No one was allowed to tread on the place where it was buried, nor was any impure animal allowed to approach it.

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 174; Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 295; *B. G.* xiii, part i, 118.
[2] Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, i. 21.

It was always washed before it was used to dig the grave of a victim. It was ominous if it chanced to fall from the hands of the man who carried it. It was used in taking the most solemn oaths. Thugs believed that their goddess Devi presented to her votaries one of her teeth to be used as a pickaxe, a rib for a knife, and the hem of her lower garment for a noose.[1] The pickaxe was thus believed to be an embodiment of their patron goddess, and it was venerated not only as an implement, but because it was made of iron, the discovery of a higher race who conquered the men of the Stone Age, and hence it was imbued with Mana or magical power.

Weapons are thus emblems of power and confer this upon those by whom they are invested. The Rājput initiation of a youth takes the form of Kharg-bandhāi, 'the binding on of the sword'.[2] The sword of Sivāji, 'which he named after the goddess Bhavāni, is still preserved by the Raja of Sātāra with the utmost veneration, and has all the honours of an idol paid to it'.[3] Guru Gobind Singh substituted for the Sikhs the rite of Pāhul for the earlier custom of drinking the water in which the feet of the Guru had been dipped. The Pāhul rite provides that the initiate after bathing and donning clean cloths sits in the assembly, sugar is mixed with water in an iron vessel, and five Sikhs in turn stir it with a double-edged dagger, while verses of the Granth, their scriptures, are chanted. The water thus consecrated is called Amrita, 'water of immortality', and confers immortality on the initiate, making him a Singh, or 'lion', and a true Kshatriya.[4] It is difficult to say why the rite has been called a form of baptism.

Rājputs and other high castes represent by the sword the absent bridegroom, and to it, as his representative, the bride is married. The custom probably originated in a desire for secrecy, and as a means of avoiding danger to the youth by visiting a strange clan the members of which may resist his removal of the bride, in some cases for the sake of convenience, in some as a means of reducing marriage expenses.[5] Rājputs, as a martial tribe, venerate the sword at the Naurātra festival,

[1] Thornton, 46 ff.; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 574 ff.
[2] Tod, i. 185.
[3] Grant Duff, i. 230 f.: but it cannot now be traced.
[4] Macauliffe, v. 93; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 696 f.
[5] Tod, i. 359; Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 624; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 77.

the first nine days of the month Asvin or Āsva (September–October), and they take their most solemn oaths on it.[1] Nāgas swear on the Dao knife.[2] Orāons hold in superstitious awe a sword with which a man has been slain. It is hung up in the house, drops of wine are poured on it on feast days, and the owner, if he can avoid doing so, never will use it again, because when it has once tasted human blood it will never rest quietly till it has drunk it again.[3]

Tools and implements used in crafts are venerated. The potter's wheel is worshipped as a symbol of fertility at marriages, and if a child born of the marriage is deformed it is said that the potter's thumb must have slipped.[4] In Kangra the Kumhār potters say that their wheel sprang from the ear-ring of the saint Gorakhnāth, which he gave to them. They worship it at the Dīvāli lamp festival, when they abstain from work. They make offerings to it in fulfilment of vows, and if a goat is sacrificed they sprinkle its blood on the wheel. When it is used for the first time sweet porridge is offered to it, and if a man has no children or if they die young he vows his next child to the wheel, and makes offerings to it when his wish has been granted.[5] Even the clay of the potter has the virtue of curing the bite of a mad dog.[6]

Chamārs at the Dīvāli or lamp festival worship the Rānpi or knife with which they scrape the hair from hides, and they swear by the shoemaker's last; the children of a Darzi or tailor worship his scissors; weavers their loom and other implements; the Bihishti or water-carrier his goat-skin bag; the barber his scissors, mirror, razor, and nail-parer; the carpenter his adze, chisel, and saw; the fisherman his boat and nets. Ghāntras, brass- and iron-workers in Bengal, worship Kāli in the form of an iron rod, offering to it fowls, goats, rice, and milk, and once a year during the Kāli Pūja they worship a lump of charcoal as the emblem of their craft; the Sānsia masons in the Central Provinces worship Visvakarma, the divine architect, and at four festivals revere their trade implements and the

[1] Tod, i. 679 f., 689.
[2] Hodson, *Nagas*, 101.
[3] Sarat Chandra Roy, 185.
[4] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 65; Crooke, *T. C.* iv. 270; Russell, *T. C.* i. 62
[5] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 567.
[6] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 54.

book on architecture by which they work.[1] Nepalese worship their weapons and regimental colours at the Dasahra festival, and at the Dīvāli, lamp feast, on the first day they worship dogs, on the second cows and bulls; on the third day capitalists worship their treasure under the name of Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, on the fourth day every householder worships the members of his family as deities, and on the fifth sisters worship their brothers.[2] Bankers and other merchants, as a rule, make up their annual accounts at the Dīvāli, and then open a new set of books. In Western India they perform the Vahi-pūjan, or book worship, by calling in Brahmans, piling their books on a wooden stool in front of the image of Lakshmi, lighting lamps and strewing flowers over the ledger. The priest prays to the goddess to bless the business of the coming year, and dipping his fingers in saffron or vermilion makes round marks on the first page of each book. The worship ends by his writing on the walls of the room the words, 'Salutation to the great Ganesa!' and 'Mother Lakshmi! Help us, make our treasure chests to overflow!'[3] In the Panjab the Agarwāla Banni merchants perform this rite at the Dasahra, the great Rajput festival, and hence claim to belong to this tribe; in Bengal it is done at the Sripanchami festival, held on the fifth of the bright fortnight of Sāwan (January–February), when they worship pens, ink, and account books in honour of Sarasvati, goddess of learning.[4]

Thieves and burglars worship the implements of their craft. Majahiya Doms in the United Provinces and Bihar worship the jemmy which they use to dig through the mud walls of houses, and, as a survival from the Age of Stone, they exclude any member from the tribe who uses otherwise an iron implement, as they believe that this will cause the eyes to drop out; Chauhāns in the Central Provinces, who used to be addicted to petty theft, are said to have worshipped the iron rod used for digging through walls, but they are now village watchmen and accordingly worship at the Dasahra the bludgeon which is their badge of office.[5]

[1] Gait, *C. R.* i. 411; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 498.
[2] Oldfield, ii. 344 ff., 352 f.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 82; G. H. Desai, *C. R.* i. 68; J. A. Dalal, *C. R.* i. 125.
[4] H. H. Wilson, ii. 187; Risley, *People of India*, 235 f.; B. A. Gupte, 241.
[5] Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 331; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 428 f.

'Therefore they sacrifice unto their net and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat and their meat plenteous.'[1] But in all these cases which we have been considering it is difficult to draw the line between worship, reverence, and a magical act done with the object of infusing into things like implements the energy and skill of the maker, owner, or workman. This appears to be in many cases the chief cause of the rites which have been described.

[1] Habakkuk, i. 16.

XIII

FIRE

The cult of fire has passed through two stages: 'the first is the rude barbarian adoration of the actual flame, which he watches writhing, roaring, devouring like a wild animal; the second belongs to an advanced generalization, that any individual fire is a manifestation of one general, elemental being, the Fire-God.'[1] Some people in the lower culture seem to have advanced beyond the former, or pre-animistic view, but the latter was that of the Indo-Aryans of the Vedic age, and survives among modern Hindus.[2] 'What is probably the oldest function of fire in regard to its cult, that of burning and dispelling evil spirits and hostile magic, still survives in the Veda. Agni drives away the goblins with his light and receives the epithet Raksohan, "goblin-slayer". When kindled he consumes with iron teeth and scorches with heat the sorcerers as well as the goblins, protecting the sacrifice with keen glance.'[3] It has, however, been denied that this, the most widespread, theory is not a Vedic cult; it has been amalgamated with the ordinary sacrificial fire, but is represented in the more elaborate ritual of the three fires by the Daksina or southern, for it is from the south that the souls of the dead and cognate uncanny spirits appear.[4]

But besides these Aryan and non-Aryan cults fire worship has been introduced into India from foreign lands. The White Huns in the late fifth and early sixth centuries of our era brought with them the cults of the sun and fire, and their priests were absorbed into Hinduism under the name of Maga Brahmans.[5] Parsis, again, who migrated from Persia when that country was occupied by the Arabs in the eighth century, brought their sacred fire with them, but they claim to be strict monotheists

[1] Tylor, ii. 277. [2] Macdonell, *V. M.* 88 ff.; Hopkins, 105 ff.
[3] Macdonell, *op. cit.* 95. [4] Oldenberg, 340; *J. R. A. S.* 1895, p. 960.
[5] J. Wilson, i. 438; *B. G.* ix, part i, 439 f., xiii, part i, 253; *E. R. E.* viii. 243; *J. R. A. S.* 1912, p. 803, 1915, p. 425 ff.

and indignantly repudiate the title of 'fire-worshippers'. The existence of fire-worshippers in Northern India is attested as late as the invasion of Timūr, A. D. 1398–9.[1]

The method of making fire by twirling a piece of bamboo or other wood in a cavity made in a second piece of a harder nature, the spark resulting from the friction being received on dry leaves or other suitable tinder, is in common use among the jungle people of the Kaimūr and Vindhya ranges. Angāmi Nāgas make fire by dragging backwards and forwards a piece of split bamboo, peeled down till it becomes a pliant thong, through a notch in a piece of softer wood; the fire-stick is exclusively used on ceremonial occasions.[2] When a Sema Nāga is buried a fire-stick and thongs for making fire are tied to the inside of his shield.[3] The use of the flint and steel is also common, and it is said that the Nāgas of Manipur were taught by their god to make fire from a stone, and to this day the sacred stone from which they first struck fire is standing and worshipped.[4]

Fire made by the fire-stick by friction is used in Hindu orthodox rites. The Arani, 'moving, entering', the fire-drill, consists of five pieces: the lower bed is Adhārani, usually made of a hard wood such as that of the Khadira or Khair (*Acacia catechu*), in which two holes are bored, the Garta, 'hollow', the pit in which the plunger works, and beside it the Yoni, 'matrix', into which the sparks fall and ignite the tinder; the upper plunger or revolving portions of the drill, Uttarārani, 'upper drill', or Pramantha, 'plunger', consisting of an upper portion, Mantha, 'churner', and the lower, Sanku, 'dart, spike', worked by a Netra or 'cord', the Sanku revolving in the hole in the bed of the machine. The Sanku is made of a wood softer than that of the base-board, usually of Pīpal (*Ficus religiosa*), several 'darts' being provided to replace those which become worn away by friction. The last piece is the Upamantha, 'upper churner', a piece of wood which the priest presses down on the plunger so as to force it into the lower hole as it is being revolved. The best Pīpal wood to form the plunger is taken from a tree growing as a parasite on a Sami

[1] Elliot–Dowson, v. 563; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 46.
[2] Hutton, *Angami*, 56; Mills, 6 note 1; *J. R. A. S.* xliv. 32 ff.
[3] Hutton, *Sema*, 245 f.
[4] Hodson, *Nagas*, 10.

or Chhenkur (*Acacia suma*), and the rope should be made of San hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) or from the hair of a cow's tail.[1]

The making of the sacred fire is specialized by the Agnihotra or 'fire-priest' Brahmans. On the night before fire is made the upper Arani or plunger is put in charge of the husband and the lower portion in that of his wife, and both sleep with these parts at night, the process of fire-making symbolizing coition.[2] In the morning both of them bathe and a jar of water is placed in a hut built specially for the rite, the floor of which is plastered with cow-dung and water. A fire is lighted in the Kunda or sacrificial pit, to the north of which the Arani is placed. The man holds the plunger firmly so that the 'churner' and dart cannot leave the hole in the base-board, and his wife revolves it by pulling the rope until fire is produced and communicated to the tinder. Both of them are subject to special taboos. Agnihotra Brahmans keep the fire in a special room carefully guarded from pollution, and generally keep three pits, one at which the Homa or fire-sacrifice is performed; a second out of which fire is taken to burn the Agnihotra or any member of the family when they die; a third from which it is taken for ordinary domestic purposes. If the Agnihotra's by chance is extinguished he must get it from the pit of another Agnihotra or produce it by means of the Arani.[3] A Brahman should keep the fire alight during his life once it has been kindled on the day when he was invested with the sacred thread, but Shenvi Brahmans in Western India after letting it go out on the fourth day after this rite rekindle it on their marriage day, at the birth of a child, on the day it is named, at the puberty rite, and finally it is lighted on the day of death and on the eleventh day of mourning.[4]

The making of special fire is not restricted to Brahmans. Lamān Banjāras do not, as a rule, follow the custom of bringing fire with the corpse to the cremation ground, but the chief mourner makes it afresh with the Chagmāg or Chakmak, the flint and steel which every man carries.[5] A group of Khatris

[1] An example of the Arani, procured by the writer with difficulty at Benares, the implement being sacred and carefully protected from strangers, particularly non-Hindus, is now in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford.

[2] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', ii. 208 f., 213; *E. R. E.* ix. 519.

[3] For details see Crooke, *T. C.* i. 30 ff.; *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 93 f.; Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 107 f.; Thurston, *T. C.* v. 199.

[4] *B. G.* xv, part i, 163 note; Ward, ii, Introd. xxv.

[5] *B. G.* xvii. 60.

in the Panjab perform the Bhaddan rite after the birth of a child, at which all the food consumed must be cooked on a fire kindled by the friction of two pieces of wood worked by members of the family, who fast till it is made.[1]

New fire is also made on special occasions. When a new house is built Nāgas make new fire by means of the fire-saw, and when a family goes out of mourning for a relative the first food must be cooked over a fire started in this manner, and Lhota Nāgas, after the site has been cleared for a new village, cause the founder to make new fire by the fire-stick.[2] In Southern India at the Kota annual fertility rite and at the Badaga fire-walk the fire used for boiling the milk from which omens are taken and for setting fire to the wood is made by the fire-stick, as above described.[3] At the burial rites of the Mishmis of Assam a dance with much noise was performed to frighten the devils. After this all lights were put out and the party remained in darkness until a man suspended by a rope from the roof obtained a light from a flint. He had to be careful, being in a state of infectious taboo, not to touch the ground while he was making it, and the light thus obtained was supposed to be fresh from heaven.[4] Like many customs which Akbar adopted from religions other than Islam, he used to have new fire made: 'at noon of the day when the sun enters the 19th degree of Aries, the whole world being then surrounded by his light, they expose a round piece of a white and shining stone, called in Hindi Surāj-Krānt [Surya-Kānta, "sun-loved, crystal"] to the rays of the sun. A piece of cotton is then held near it, which catches fire from the heat of the sun. The celestial fire is committed to the care of proper persons. The lamp-lighters, torch-bearers, and cooks of the household use it for their offices, and when the year has passed away in happiness they renew the fire.'[5] Akbar's regard for fire is illustrated by the terrible story of his finding a luckless lamp-lighter asleep on duty, and ordering him to be flung from a tower so that he was dashed to pieces.[6]

In many places the sacred fire is kept permanently lighted, grave misfortune is apprehended if it is extinguished, and its

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 519: cf. Thurston, *T. C.* v. 162.
[2] *J. R. A. I.* xxvi. 188, xxxii. 466; Mills, 5 f.
[3] Madras Museum *Bulletin*, ii. 200; Thurston, *T. C.* i. 99.
[4] Dalton, 17.
[5] *Āīn-i-Akbari*, i. 48 f.
[6] Smith, *Akbar*, 164 f.

careless guardians are severely punished for their negligence. In a Nepal temple dedicated to Sambhunāth, 'the Lord who grants happiness', a form of Siva, a family of Tibetan Lamas keeps the sacred fire, which is said to have come down from heaven, in two large copper cauldrons, in which the fire is maintained by supplies of ghi.[1] At a cave in the lower Panjab hills dedicated to Dewat Siddh, who was apparently an ascetic deified in ancient times, a sacred fire is kept burning on which the food offered to him is cooked.[2] Kānphata or 'split-eared' Jogis, at Dhinodhar in Cutch, since the death of Dharannāth, the founder of the order, keep a lamp burning to which worship is done daily, and in a shed close by the sacred fire burns since his death many years ago.[3] In the city of Gorakhpur the representative of a famous Musalmān Shi'a Faqīr keeps a fire continually burning in the court of the Imāmbāra, and this is said to have lasted for more than a century and a half; the ashes are reputed to cure fever in children.[4]

The most famous natural fire is that at Juālamukha in the Kangra District, Panjab, where the gas arising from a cleft in the rock used to burn in a pit arranged for the purpose, and it was believed to be a manifestation of Kāli or Devi. The shrine was ruined in the earthquake of 1904, but the custodians of such a valuable property have probably arranged for a continuance of the miracle.[5] Similar fires at Baku in Russian Transcaucasia are visited by adventurous Hindu pilgrims.[6]

The Parsi cult of the sacred fire among Parsis is important, but, as has been said, they protest against being called 'worshippers of fire'; they regard it as the emblem of refulgence, glory, and light, the truest symbol of God, the noblest, most excellent and most useful of God's creations, and its purity is enhanced by the rites performed at its installation. When a fire-temple is founded fire is brought from various places where it is produced, each being kept in a different vase. Great efforts are made to obtain fire caused by lightning. Over one

[1] Oldfield, ii. 242. [2] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 279. [3] *B. G.* v. 86.

[4] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 199. Buchanan (ii. 347) mentions the Imāmbāra, but does not refer to the fire. The writer saw it burning nearly fifty years ago, and people used to bow before it at the annual Passion Play at the Muharram festival.

[5] *E. R. E.* vii. 579 f: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', ii. 256, 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris', i. 193 f. [6] *J. R. A. S.* 1897, pp. 311 ff.

of these fires a perforated flat metal tray with a handle is held, and on the tray chips and dust of sandalwood are laid. These are ignited by the fire over which they are held, but care is taken that the tray shall not touch the fire. From this new fire a second is created by the same process, and so on till the operation is performed nine times, when it is considered to be pure. The fires brought from other places are treated in the same way, and the fire thus finally created and purified is laid in a vase which is kept in a place carefully protected. Besides this perpetual temple fire the Parsi never allows his hearth-fire to go out. If he moves to a new house in the same village he carries his fire with him, but if he goes to a distance he gives it to friends or relations who mix it with their own, and he procures new fire from some sacred source.[1] The history of the sacred fire after it was re-established on Indian soil are described in the Parsis records.[2]

The Hindu ritual fire is the Homa which is the accompaniment of many rites. An orthodox Brahman does the fire sacrifice twice daily, in the morning and in the evening before he eats food, the theory being that Agni, the fire god, who does the cooking, must be fed first. This rite is also done at all the family worship. The fire, which should be produced by artificial means, is fed with twigs and pieces of sacred wood, known as Samidh, 'burning together', taken from the various species of the fig, Sami (*Acacia suma*) or Palāsa-Khākhro (*Butea frondosa*), and into it ghi, curds, rice, and other grains are cast. If the fire goes out, fresh fire is brought from the house of a person who has produced it by friction, or has used it for sacrifical purposes.[3] In Vedic marriage ritual the bridegroom grasped the hand of the bride and led her round the household fire.[4] In the modern orthodox ritual the Saptapadi, 'seven steps', consists in laying small heaps of rice in a straight line north and south of the marriage fire, and on each of these heaps seven areca-nuts, seven copper coins, and seven dates are laid. The bride in old times used to take seven actual steps from heap to heap, but nowadays she contents herself with sticking out her

[1] Dosabhai Framji, ii. 210 ff.; *B. G.* ix, part ii, 213 ff.
[2] Enthoven, *T. C.* iii. 184 ff.; *B. G.* ix, part ii, 187 ff.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 133.
[4] Macdonell-Keith, i. 483 f.; Colebrooke, 133 ff.

toe and touching each separate heap, an appropriate Mantra or text being recited at each. Sometimes the pair make four circuits of the fire and a stone, moving from right to left, and at each turn dropping ghi and fried grain into the fire.[1] The number of circuits varies in different castes from seven to four. A curious variance of custom appears at a Lohāna wedding in Sindh; a virgin girl ties the ends of the garments of the pair in a knot, and sets fire to a shrub round which the couple walk three times.[2]

The Agnikunda or fire-pit, in which the sacred fire is kept, appears in the famous legend of the Agnikula or 'fire-born' septs of the Rājputs, originally Gurjara or other Huns absorbed into Hinduism, who were purified from the taint of Hinduism by passing through the fire, and thus became fit to aid the Brahmans in their struggle with Buddhist and Jain 'heresies'.[3] Even now in Bombay members of a Musalmān sweeper caste may rise to the more respectable grade of the Māchhi or fisherman by passing through the fire with certain ceremonies.[4]

Fire ordeals intended to detect a criminal, to test the chastity of a woman, or to purify her from the taint of immorality, of which the classical case is that of Sītā in the Rāmāyana, fall into the same category.[5] This principle has been recognized by Sir James Frazer as an explanation of the strange custom of the fire-walk, of which many instances in India have been collected.[6] The immunity from the effects of fire which the performers are said to enjoy has been accounted for on the theory that they were under the influence of a drug such as Bhang or Indian hemp; that they tread, not on the actual fire, but on ashes lying at the side of the trench; that there is a certain amount of auto-suggestive anaesthesia during the performance, followed by a suppression of inflammatory symptoms, for which hypnotic clinics in Europe can supply parallels.[7]

[1] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 89 f.; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 291, ii. 89; *B. G.* ix, part i, 45.
[2] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 383.
[3] Tod, i, Introd. xxxiii.
[4] Enthoven, *C. R.* i. 210.
[5] *Jātaka*, i. 154 f.; Russell, *T. C.* i. 384; Thurston, *T. C.* vi. 132; cf. *Folk-lore*, xiii. 263: for her water ordeal see Somadeva, i. 487.
[6] Frazer, *G. B.* 'Balder the Beautiful', ii. 1 ff., 16 ff.; *E. R. E.* vi. 30 f.; Ja'far Sharīf, 158, 195.
[7] O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 413; Risley, *T. C.* i. 255; *Man*, iv. 57; *Folk-lore*, vi. 257.

The protective powers of fire and light in repelling evil spirits, indicated by its use in the delivery-room, and the carrying of fire round the house, date from an early period; in fact, the use of fire as a magical protective probably preceded the sacramental development of the cult.[1] It is thus natural that fire should be treated with respect; no one must blow at it with his mouth, and if a servant is ordered to put out a light he waves his hand or a cloth to do so.[2]

Hindus, though they reverence the house-hearth, do not seem to have personified it as a deity like the Greek Hestia or the Latin Vesta, but place it in charge of the greater gods, like Agni, witness of the marriage rite performed at it, as Gonds and allied tribes entrust its care to godlings like Dūlhadeo or Bhīmsen.[3] Agnihotrị Brahmans reserve the Homasāla, a special room, for the holy fire. When a Lhota Nāga builds a new house and has expelled the demons occupying it, an elder fixes the site of the hearth-stone, and then lights a fire by means of a fire-stick or brings fire from another house. Food is cooked and eaten and the elder takes the omens.[4] Artisans who use a hearth in their work worship it, like the Sonār jewellers in Khāndesh who treat it as an impersonation of Vāgīsvari or Sarasvati, goddess of wealth and learning, by throwing some wine and the tongue of a goat on their fire on the last day of the month Sāvan (July–August).[5] The house fire is, as we have seen,[6] used in the marriage rites, and among the lower castes in the northern plains the Matmangara, 'lucky earth', the collection of earth out of which the wedding cooking-place is made, is an important rite. At a Kewat wedding in Bengal, after the ceremonial bathing of bride and bridegroom, the mother or female guardian of the bride brings home a clod of earth, out of which a rude fire-place is made, and in it ghi is lighted and rice is parched in honour of the household godling at the threshold of the kitchen where he is supposed to dwell.[7] Bhuiya women in Mirzapur, headed by a Chamār currier beating a drum, go to the village clay-pit, worship the drum by marking it with vermilion; then the Baiga priest digs three spadefuls of earth

[1] *S. B. E.* xii. 45.
[2] Manu, *Laws*, iv. 48, 53, 54, 58, 142.
[3] Nelson, *Raipur Gaz.* i. 74; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 126; cf. *E. R. E.* ix. 264.
[4] Mills, 34.
[5] *B. G.* xii. 72.
[6] p. 339 above.
[7] Risley, *T. C.* i. 456.

which is received by the mother of bride and bridegroom, who stands behind him veiled because at this crisis she is liable to be injured by the Evil Eye or evil spirits; he passes it to her over his left shoulder, and when the earth is placed in the marriage shed on it is laid a jar full of water into which mango leaves and rice stalks are thrown as a fertility charm.[1] Among those castes which have adopted Brahmanical rules of purity in connexion with food the fire-place becomes a sacred spot carefully guarded against any form of pollution.

Ashes in connexion with the sanctity of fire have a special value. This, as we have seen,[2] is the case with one of the perpetual fires, and ashes from the Holi fire protect people from ill luck and the Evil Eye, cure scorpion stings, and in Central India people as a protective sing indecent songs as they throw the ashes at each other.[3] A Lingāyat woman after her courses is purified by bathing and rubbing her forehead with ashes.[4] Ashes taken from the fire of a Jogi ascetic are used in charms and in Black Magic. Ascetics rub their bodies with ashes to mark their abandonment of social life, as a protection from evil spirits in their lonely wanderings, and with the practical object of saving themselves from mosquitoes and flies.

The chief feasts in which veneration for fire and lights appears are the Holi and the Dīvāli.

The Holi, a word probably derived from the ecstatic singing at the festival, takes place at the full moon of the month Phālgun (February–March), when it becomes a spring fertility rite.[5] The fire is lighted on the night of the full moon, and the fuel is provided by the villagers or taken by force from its owners, who are supposed to make no protest. In the lower Himalaya, a tree, not a pile of wood, is set on fire, the burning of the old year. Some articles, miscalled 'offerings', are thrown into the fire, and the villagers walk round it in the course of the sun. Some jump over the fire or on the hot ashes. On the second day the people throw dust, dirt, or red-coloured water at each other. Foul abuse and indecencies of act and word are used. Sometimes

[1] Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 77.
[2] p. 338 above.
[3] Russell, *Seoni Gaz.* i. 50 f.; Broughton, 69, 71.
[4] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 363.
[5] For details see Crooke, 'The Holi, or Vernal Festival of the Hindus', *Folk-lore*, xxv. 55 ff.

there is a procession of a mock king. Omens are taken from the direction in which the smoke of the fire is driven by the wind, which foretell the prospects of the coming harvest. The general intention of this complex of observances is probably to mark the coming of spring and to promote the fertility of men, animals, and crops.[1]

The most interesting part of the rite is the walking through the fire, of which some examples have already been given.[2] At Phalen in the Mathura District, United Provinces, 'the lads of the village kept on running close round it, jumping and dancing and brandishing their lāthis [bludgeons], while the Panda [priest] went down and dipped in the pond, and then with his dripping pagri [turban] and dhoti [loin-cloth] on, he ran back and made feint of passing through the fire. In reality he only jumped over the outermost verge of the smouldering ashes, and then darted into his cell again, much to the dissatisfaction of the spectators, who say that the former incumbent used to do it much more thoroughly. If on the next recurrence of the festival the Panda shows himself equally timid, the village proprietors threaten to eject him as an impostor from the land which he holds rent-free simply on the score of his being fire-proof'.[3]

According to a later account of the festival in the same village, for some eight days before the Holi the Panda stayed in a mud hut near the village tank, spending his time in prayer and fasting, his only food being milk. A bonfire was made of wild caper branches with a substratum of cow-dung cakes. Before the pile was set alight women walked winding skeins of thread round it as they do when circumambulating a holy tree. Some men postured in the village square, in long white garments, half stupefied with drink, and with their faces painted red. The fire-walking took place at night, according to some at an auspicious time fixed by an astrologer. The Panda in his hut constantly passed his hands through the flame of a lamp, and when this no longer burned his flesh he announced that the time had come. The fire was then lighted and the villagers armed with stout clubs circled round it, dancing and keeping the people away. The dry thorns blazed up fiercely, and if the Panda

[1] *Ibid.* 83. [2] p. 340 above. [3] Growse, *Mathura*, 93.

passed through the flames at once it would have been a miracle if he escaped without severe burns. He leisurely disrobed and went to the tank accompanied by an old woman and bathed, being dressed only in his turban and loin-cloth. The old woman on his return went before him carrying a brass pot full of water which she threw on the edge of the fire, and the Panda jumped through the flames, sinking nearly to his knees on the burning cow-dung, the flames of which, however, were not very intense. He is said to escape without singeing even the hairs on his legs. He stated that he knew Mantra or spells, which he communicates only on his death-bed to his successor in office. There was no reason to suspect that he was under the influence of drugs.[1]

The Dīvāli or feast of lights is held on the new-moon day of the month Kārttik (October–November). In some places two holidays under this name are observed; in Western India the Deodīvāli or 'gods' lamp festival', held on the 11th day of the bright half of Kārttik, and the regular Dīvāli on the 13th and 14th Āsvin (September–October); in the Panjab the ordinary Dīvāli, known as Chhoti, 'little', is held on the 11th bright half of Kārttik, and it is followed by the Bari or 'great', the Govardhan, which has been already described.[2] Many silly legends have been invented to explain the origin of the festival. In one a Raja was warned that his Kāl or Fate would appear that night in the form of a snake, and that his only chance of escape was that all houses should be cleansed and lights kept burning. The snake came and was so pleased with the arrangements which the wise Rāni had made to save her husband's life that he promised her any boon she desired. She asked that long life should be given to her husband, and the snake answered that though he could not prevent Yama, god of death, from seizing him, he would arrange that he should be released. When the Raja in due course appeared at the court of Yama the god found that in his paper his age was denoted by a cipher, but the kindly snake placed a 7 before it, and Yama was forced to accept the record. 'This person', said he, 'has still seventy years to live. Take him back to earth at once.' So in memory of this miracle people clean their houses and light lamps on

[1] Captain G. R. Hearn, *Man*, v. 154 f.

[2] p. 260 above.

that night.[1] It has been suggested that the date of the festival is connected with the entrance of the sun into the sign of Tula or Libra, marking the beginning of its apparent return journey towards Northern India, and the consequent destruction of filth and disease. In Bengal the autumn rice crop is sold about this time and the coffers of the merchants are full.[2]

On this night the souls of the sainted dead of the household are believed to return to their old home. The festival is thus a household rite; the house is cleansed, the old lamps are thrown away and replaced by new ones, which are lighted, and the members of the family sit up to receive the ancestral spirits.[3] As spirits are abroad on this night the powers of the exorcist are unusually great; this is also the case on the 14th, 15th, and 29th day of each month, and at the Holi, Naurātra, and Durga-pūja festivals. On these nights witches and wizards are on the prowl. They cast off their clothes, ride on tigers and other wild beasts, and alligators convey them over streams. A woman dying on that night is apt to become a Churel or malignant spirit. In Northern India at this time the increasing cold causes snakes to hibernate, and so at the Dīvāli the lamps are supposed to scare snakes and banish them from the house for the next six months.[4]

Other rites are performed at the Dīvāli. Gowāri graziers in the Central Provinces dread the Dhal, the spirits of childless men and women. Such a man or woman is represented by a bamboo to which a cross-piece is fixed, a woman by a stick crossed by two other pieces and lashed at the top, which are worshipped and carried in procession on that day.[5] In the Panjab the bodies of young children are buried under the threshold in the hope that their spirits may be reincarnated in some woman of the family,[6] a belief which tends to the theory that life may be stolen; at the Dīvāli male children are sometimes stolen and killed in order that a barren woman may bathe over the corpse and conceive a son.[7] Mothers in the families of the twice-born in Gujarāt commemorate the first Dīvāli after a child's birth

[1] For other explanations of the same kind see B. A. Gupte, 36 ff.
[2] B. A. Gupte, *loc. cit.*
[3] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Balder the Beautiful', i. 225.
[4] Briggs, 129, 194.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 163.
[6] p. 149 above.
[7] *E. R. E.* viii. 36.

by kneading some cow-dung into the shape of a triangle, on which are placed a piece of sugar-cane and a lighted lamp. Then she takes her baby in her arms and goes from house to house bearing the lamps and begging a few drops of ghi to keep it burning, the theory being that the child thus provides a light for the souls in Pitriloka, the land of dead ancestors.[1]

The Dīvāli marks the opening of the new year for bankers, when the old accounts are closed. On the third leaf of the new ledger a Brahman writes 'Sri', 'good luck', a title of Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, over and over again in such a way as to construct a pyramid out of the syllables. A betel leaf is laid on the page, and on it a current rupee, the newer the better. Then the Brahman does the Arti rite by waving a lamp over the book, food is given to friends and alms to the Brahman, who says, 'May you be happy all the year!'

Gambling goes on at the time as a magical means of trying one's luck for the coming year, and winning something is lucky, so at the family game it is arranged that the head of the house shall be a winner. In the Vedic age people used to gamble at the new moon, a good time for beginning anything, and in Nepal people gamble by special leave for three days.[2] Alberuni, who wrote in the eleventh century, says that Hindus maintained that this was a time of luck in the Kritayoga, or first age of the world, 'and they are happy because the feast-day in question [the Dīvāli] resembles that time in the Kritayoga'.[3] In the plains at the present day gambling, if it does not become a public nuisance, is tacitly winked at by the police.

Two festivals associated with the Dīvāli deserve mention. The first immediately following it, the Bhaiyya Dvij, or 'brothers' second', held on the second light half of Kārttik (October–November), is a household observance at which sisters make a protective mark on the forehead of their brothers, and make them eat five grains of gram, which must be swallowed whole, not chewed, an act which is believed to confer on them length of days. The sister then makes her brother face the east and feeds him with sweetmeats, in return for which he gives her a present. Another name for this rite is Yamadvītīya, which commemorates

[1] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 19, 339; *id.*, *Heart of Jainism*, 260 f.
[2] *E. R. E.* vi. 170, viii. 319; Wright, 39. [3] *India*, ii. 182.

the love of Yama, god of death, for his twin sister Yami or Yamuna, now the river Jumna. They are said to have been the first pair of the human race and the progenitors of man, an early case of brother-sister marriage.[1]

The second festival, the Hoi, held a week before the Dīvāli, seems to preserve a piece of primitive ritual. At this rite the Jhīvarni or woman who supplies the family with water, is raised to the first place in the house; she is petted and the ladies of the family act as her tire-women. The story runs that there was once a grievous famine, and when the prayers and fasting of the Brahmans gave no relief a Jhīvarni encouraged them to go on and the dearth was stayed. Then Kālika, the terrible Mother goddess, appeared holding her head in her hands and threatened to destroy the world unless they instituted a special feast on that day and honoured the Jhīvarni. By another story a Brahman girl who was about to be forcibly converted by the Musalmāns was sheltered by a Jhīvarni, whose representative has since then been honoured, an obvious attempt to connect the rite with Brahmans.[2] It seems possible that the legend embodies a tradition that the Mother goddess used to be impersonated at some rite by a woman of the Jhīvar caste, as in the Panjab the goddess Kāli is twice a year personated by a girl under ten years of age, to whom offerings are made as the representative of the goddess.[3]

[1] Macdonell, *V. M.* 173; Dowson, 373; Westermarck, *H. H. M.* ii. 92.
[2] *P. N. Q.* ii. 148.
[3] Rose, *C. R.* i. 126.

XIV

ANIMAL WORSHIP

THE attitude of the peasant towards the animal world around is markedly inconsistent. He pays much respect to one animal, the cow, but through apathy or ignorance, or from some vague regard for animal life, he will not put a merciful end to the sufferings of a dying ox, he will often starve it, use it cruelly, working it in a plough and cart when its shoulders are painfully galled. But, on the whole, he is merciful towards the abundant animal life in the villages, and such a thing as bird's-nesting is not practised by the boys.[1] In the Vedic period, 'the usual food, as far as flesh was concerned, can be gathered from the list of sacrificial victims: what man ate he presented to the gods—the sheep, the goat, and the ox'.[2] In the Epic period 'there is a very old rule against slaughtering animals and eating meat, while to eat beef is a monstrous crime, yet it is plain from the Epic that this is permissible, whilst a king is extolled for slaughtering cattle. It is said out and out that "beef is food". Deer are constantly eaten'.[3] This was probably the result of the infusion among the Rājputs, between whom and the Kshatriyas of Vedic time a great gulf is fixed, of foreign blood drawn from Central Asian Scythians or Huns.[4] Buddhists presented Ahimsa, or the sanctity of animal life, as one of the ten Sīlas or moral duties incumbent both on members of the order and lay devotees.[5] But this was a counsel of perfection. Asoka in his edicts published a long list of animals the slaughter of which was absolutely prohibited, and he imposed instructions in regard to those animals which he permitted to be killed and against mutilation. But horned cattle were not included in the list of those which were protected, and their meat was

[1] Cf. Westermarck, *M. I.* ii. 490 ff.; Kipling, 1 ff.
[2] Macdonell–Keith, ii. 147.
[3] Hopkins, 385; 'Beef in Ancient India', Rajendralala Mitra, i. 354 ff.
[4] Tod, i, Introd. xxxii ff.
[5] Kern, 70; cf. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, 163 ff.

ordinarily consumed.[1] In modern times the use of meat is generally not permitted to Brahmans and in particular it is disallowed to Vaishnavas, who largely follow Buddhist tradition, and this rule is rigidly enforced by Jains.

Many causes lead to the reverence or worship paid to animals. In the first place, there are numerous instances of totem clans refusing to kill, eat, or injure their totem animals; but this must be distinguished from animal worship; and totemism, so far as it exists in India, is more a social than a religious institution.[2] Next, there is the general belief that no distinct line can be drawn between man and the lower forms of life, and that animals have much the same feelings and passions as human beings. The peasant talks to his cow and ox in a much more personal and confidential way than even the British carter or ploughman does to his team or the dairymaid to her cow. In the pastoral and agricultural stage prevailing in Northern India special regard is paid to the domesticated animals on whom the existence of the farmer or herdsman depends. He is deeply learned in the points of a beast, as is shown by the myriad names which he applies to the breeds and varieties of them. His house is often the cowshed and he lives with his cattle in a much more familiar way than the British farmer; he has, as we have already seen,[3] numberless magical methods of protecting them, and almost each caste or tribe concerned with cattle has its own special godling; he is anxious when they are ill, and he mourns the loss of a beast by disease, accident, or theft as if it was a member of his family. The theory of transmigration, again, links him closely with the animal world. According to the amount of Karma or merit which he has accumulated he may be reborn as a Raja or a pig, an ox or some loathsome vermin. If a man is slain by a tiger his spirit may enter another tiger and return to attack his descendants; the presence of the spirit when it revisits its home may be indicated by the footprints of an animal in the ashes.

The close relations between man and the animal world are

[1] Smith, *Asoka*, 57, 207.
[2] Frazer, *Totemism*, ii. 218 ff., 587; Macdonell, *V. M.* 153; Macdonell-Keith, ii. 111, 378; *E. R. E.* xii. 397 f., 402; Risley, *People of India*, 95 ff. *J. R. A. S.* 1907, pp. 931, 939; Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 36, 48.
[3] p. 258 above.

constantly illustrated in the folk-tales, which are told not to amuse children in the nursery, but are narratives the truth of which the peasant implicitly believes. The transformation of men into animals and animals into men is a stock incident. A woman fastens a string round her lover's neck and turns him into an ox; a wife turns her husband into a buffalo by throwing dust in his face; a hermit turns a Raja into an elephant, and so on.[1] Animals show the path to fortune, warn the hero or heroine of danger, help him in return for services rendered; plants and animals talk, and some people understand their language.[2] The spirits of the dead naturally assume the form of familiar, house-haunting creatures, like snakes, flies, bees, or ants, or if they are malignant they assume the form of tomb-haunters, like the jackal or vulture. The courage, strength, or agility of some animals may be conveyed to those who wear their claws, hair, or flesh as amulets. Some animals, like the ape, are regarded as semi-human, some may represent the Corn spirit, revered or killed in their divine form to promote the growth of vegetation.

Besides that of the fouler animals or vermin the flesh of certain animals is prohibited as food.[3] Some of these restrictions may be ultimately based on totemism, but other ideas of a magical kind contribute to the taboo. Lhota Nāgas think that whoever eats or even kills an otter will never be able to get his fields to burn properly, perhaps because the otter is a water animal; the minevet is forbidden because the markings of the cocks are supposed to be splashes of human blood; parrots because on account of the shape of their beaks children would be everlastingly pinching their friends; the white-capped redstart because any one who eats it becomes bald-headed, and so on.[4]

The horse is naturally revered by a race of warriors. In the Veda, besides the celestial horses which draw the cars of the gods, there are the divine steeds Dadhikrā, Tarhsya or Paidva, and Uchchaihsravas, the white horse of Indra, produced at the churning of the ocean, fed on ambrosia, and king of all horses.[5] Kalki, the white horse, is the tenth incarnation of

[1] Somadeva, i. 342, ii. 135, 230.
[2] Temple–Steel, 412 f.
[3] Crooke, *Things Indian*, 225 ff.
[4] Mills, 75.
[5] Macdonell, *V. M.* 148 f.; Dowson, 324.

Vishnu, yet to come. The Asvamedha was the most imposing rite in ancient India. A horse was allowed to wander loose, its attempted capture was the signal for tribal war, and, finally, after a year the animal was sacrificed with solemn rites, and won for its owner success in war and extension of his kingdom.[1] Sacrifices of his animal, the horse, to the sun were common.[2] Rājputs have inherited this veneration of the horse from the ancient Kshatriyas, as is shown in the parading, naming, and bathing of them at the tribal festival, the Dasahra; Palliwāl Brahmans in Rajputana worship the bridle of a horse, and Rājputs commemorate the chargers of their heroes by stately monuments.[3] Clay images of horses are often found at the village shrines where they serve as the equipage of the godlings, and Hindus hang little images of horses on the grave of the horse of the Musalmān saint Alam Sayyid near Baroda.[4] The Ghodāpīr or horse saint of Poona is represented by a life-sized horse made of sawdust, on the back of which Musalmāns at the Muharram festival erect a Tābūt or tomb of the martyrs, low-caste Hindus worship it in time of trouble, and women pray to it for a baby and for the recovery of sick children.[5] The famous mare of the hero Gugga has been already mentioned,[6] and a tale is told of the sweepers' saint Lāl Beg, that when the horse of the emperor died, the sweeper cooked one leg of it, and when the emperor heard of this he ordered Lāl Beg to produce the animal. He revived it by his magic power, and lo! it appeared on three legs.[7] The wilder forest tribes who had never seen a horse until it appeared in the trains of their Hindu or Musalmān conquerors, reverence the animal. Bhīls revere it more than any other animal, and Gonds worship Ghordeo or Kodapen, the horse god, represented by a stone, to which their priest prays: 'Thou art the guardian of our village! We offer to thee according to our means! Protect our oxen and cows! Keep us in safety! Let there be no fear in the jungle!'[8] It is a necessary incident in a Māng wedding that the bridegroom should be mounted on a horse; but their rivals, the Mahārs, who worship the horse, think

[1] *E. R. E.* ii. 160 f.
[2] *J. R. A. S.* 1921, 547 ff., 624.
[3] Tod, i. 395, ii. 682 f., 1255, iii. 1501, 1826.
[4] Rousselet, 121.
[5] *B. G.* xviii, part iii, 336.
[6] p. 163 above.
[7] *P. N. Q.* ii. 2.
[8] *B. G.* iii. 220, ix, part i, 173; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 97; Hislop, App. i, p. iii.

this a terrible degradation of their sacred animal, and riots between the castes have originated from it.[1]

Riding on an ass is generally a form of degradation; when a Korava is excommunicated for a sexual offence he is made to ride on an ass with bones tied round his neck.[2] The tale of the ass in a lion's skin is widespread in Indian tradition, and in one of the Kashmīr tales a bird announces that if any one smells a ball made of the bark and leaves of a certain tree he will be turned into an ass; if any one treads on the place where an ass has rolled he will get a pain in his leg.[3] Magadha, as we have seen, is a region outside the pale of Brahmans, and it is believed that any one dying at Ramnagar on the Ganges opposite Benares will become an ass in his next birth. It is a good example how myths are changed by a corruption of names that the odium attaching to Magadha has been transferred to Maghar in the Basti District, United Provinces, well beyond the Magadha border.[4]

Nowadays the ass is regarded as an ignoble animal, the steed of Sītala, the small-pox Mother, and associated with mean crafts like that of the potter or the washerman who use it as a beast of burden. But in Vedic times asses drew the car of the Asvins; the Indian troops in the army of Xerxes rode in chariots drawn by horses or by wild asses.[5] In the Krishna legend Dhenuka, the ass demon, kicks Balarāma and is promptly flung into a tree by the hero.[6] The ass is the type of lubricity, and the student who broke his vows had to offer a one-eyed ass to Nirriti, goddess of death, a propitiatory sacrifice as well as a magical fertility charm.[7] When the chief of the Komatis entered a town in Mysore on horseback with an umbrella held over his head, this assumption of rank was so deeply resented by a rival caste that a rumour spread that a jackass should be killed in the street 'which would cause the immediate desolation of the place'.[8] In quite recent times in Baroda the site of a

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 186 f.
[2] Thurston, *T. C.* iii. 465.
[3] Somadeva, ii. 65; Knowles, 90; *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 181.
[4] *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 27, iii. 36; Macauliffe, vi. 137.
[5] Macdonell, *V. M.* 50; Herodotus, vii. 86.
[6] *Vishnu Purāna*, 517; Growse, *Mathura*, 58.
[7] Manu, *Laws*, xi. 19; Ward, ii. 266: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Scapegoat', 25.
[8] Thurston, *T. C.* iii. 340.

refractory village was changed by the order of the Government, and the place was ploughed up with asses to prevent the people from reoccupying it.[1] Asses, however, are used in the marriage rites of certain castes, possibly because it is the beast of Sītala, the terror of Indian mothers. Dhīmar fishermen in the Central Provinces, though they are despised for keeping the animal, use it for carrying loads, the bridegroom rides on it at his wedding, and it is the only beast which may be touched when dead without causing pollution.[2] The explanation of its connexion with small-pox is also given in the Panjab, where the bridegroom is made to ride a short distance on an ass because the Mother, thus honoured, will bring the rite to a happy conclusion; the Mārwāri bridegroom rides in this way to propitiate her, and the beast is given a feed of pulse; the Agarwāla bridegroom has to touch the ass belonging to the Kumhār potter, possibly by way of propitiation and as a fertility charm, but in the Central Provinces it is interpreted to mean that he is doing a very foolish act in marrying.[3] In the same connexion it is believed in Bengal that asses' milk is a remedy in cases of small-pox; as their bray keeps the disease out of the village they are fed on soaked grain during an epidemic.[4]

The Indian lion, not as is popularly supposed, the maneless variety, is now verging on extinction, and is found only in the Gīr forest in Kāthiāwār.[5] It is popularly believed that only one pair of lions exists at the same time, and they have two cubs, a male and a female, which when mature devour their parents. The animal is constantly mentioned in the folk-tales: the Raja sees a boy, splendid as the sun, riding on a lion, and kills the beast which suddenly becomes a man; the lion flees at the bellowing of the bull; he is outwitted by the hare; but there is only a faint echo of the famous tale of Androcles.[6] Devi takes her title of Sinhavāhīnī because she rode on a lion when she fought with the Asura Raktavīja; in other words, she is a deified lioness.[7]

[1] *B. G.* vii. 360; *N. I. N. Q.* v. 197.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 503.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 11; Crooke, *T. C.* i. 22, iii. 481; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 138.
[4] Moberley, 243.
[5] Blanford, 56 ff.; Macdonell–Keith, ii. 448 f.
[6] Somadeva, i. 37, ii. 28, 167.
[7] On the Mother goddess and the lion see Frazer, *G. B.* 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris', i. 123 note, 164.

The tiger is naturally more prominent in folk belief, and it often takes the place of a lion as the 'vehicle' of the Mother goddess, who also is a tigress in her more cruel forms. Some tribes, possibly as a result of totemism, claim descent from a tiger. The Baghel sept of Rājputs say that they derive their descent and name from a child born in the form of a Bāgh or tiger, and they protect the animal when they can; the Bagrāwat, by a false etymology, also revere the tiger, but their tribal name is really derived from the Bāgar desert in the south-east Panjab.[1]

The belief that men are transformed into tigers is common. A tale is told of a priest who used to turn himself into a tiger, but regained human shape if a flower garland was thrown over his neck just at the moment of his transformation. But one day his new disciple was so terrified when the change began that he dropped the necklace, and the luckless beast bounded away and infested the roads for many years after.[2] It is believed that this transformation is due to eating a certain root. A washerman, who wished to see what living like a tiger was like, brought two of these roots from the jungle and ordered his wife to stand by holding one of them, and when she saw him assume the tiger's shape to thrust it into his mouth. She consented, and her husband ate the root and became a tiger. But the woman was so terrified that she ran away with the antidote, and in tiger shape he devoured many of his old friends. When he was shot he was identified because he had no tail.[3] In a similar Santāl tale a man gives his wife a root which she must give him to smell to enable him to resume human shape. She runs away in terror, but his father-in-law plucks up courage to thrust the root under the tiger's nose, and he at once becomes a man again.[4] Nāgas believe that when a man becomes a tiger or a leopard he may be recognized by having five toes instead of four, and the dew-claw is often accepted as evidence that a dead animal was a were-leopard or -tiger. A man who is a were-leopard can lift water in a basket which has wide meshes. The Angāmi say that there is a village far away in the east peopled by lycanthropists, and that there is a spring which sometimes flows

[1] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 102; Forsyth, 294; Tod, iii. 1639 f.
[2] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 124 ff.
[3] *Ibid.* 126 f.
[4] Bompas, *Folk-lore of the Santal Parganas*, 442 f.

with blood, and any one who drinks it becomes a were-tiger or -leopard. The spring is naturally avoided by those who know its qualities, but the risk to strangers is great. No actual physical transformation occurs, but the man's soul becomes bound up with the body of some particular tiger, into which it enters from time to time; and when the tiger dies the man dies also.[1] Gāros distinguish between two kinds of tiger men: one who are demons; the other, human beings who can at will appear either as men or tigers; and among the Lhotas and Aos death caused by a tiger involves the relatives in a most serious social taboo, which is not so severe among Gāros, but it causes considerable pecuniary loss to the relatives of the deceased.[2] Lushai perform a rite called Ai, by which a person can after his death gain control of the spirits of the men or wild animals killed by him in this world, and a man who has performed the Ai rite of a tiger is honoured by the erection of special memorial posts, and on the spike of one of them several oval-shaped pieces of wood are fixed to denote the number of animals killed by him. If this rite is not performed the ghosts of the beasts he has slain will haunt him.[3] When a tiger has killed a man he is fairly safe from molestation, for the ghost of his victim sits on his head, guards him from danger, and guides him on his nightly prowl for prey.[4]

If you happen to meet a tiger it is wise to be civil to him, not to address him by name, but to call him Gīdar, 'jackal', Jānwar, 'animal', or some other euphemistic term. A famous tiger in Rajputana was of such a kindly nature that he would release his victim if he was addressed as Māma, 'maternal uncle'.[5] Nor is it safe to exult when a tiger is killed. A Shikāri or hunter will break off a branch on the wayside and say, 'As thy life has departed, so may the tiger die!' but when he is killed he will pour a few drops of wine on his head and say, 'Mahārāja! while you were alive you killed only cattle, not your human subjects. Now that you are dead spare us and bless us!'[6] When Lhota Nāgas kill a tiger, if it happens to break a spear the shaft must be left in the jungle or stuck in the ground under

[1] Hutton, *Sema*, 200 f.; *id.*, *Angami*, 243 f.; Gait, *C. R. Assam*, i. 250 f.; Mills, 164 f.

[2] Playfair, 22 f.

[3] Shakespear, 78, 205; *J. R. A. I.* xxx. 380 f.

[4] *Folk-lore*, v. 296.

[5] Tod, iii. 1630 f.

[6] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', ii. 204 ff.

the quarry when it is hung up; if this is not done the owner will some day be killed by a tiger. Its head is cut off by a man who has done all the social Gennas and is a warrior of repute, and the paws by a man who belongs to a family a member of which has been killed by a tiger; this in a sense removes the curse from the family.[1] There is a general dislike to help in killing a tiger, modified, however, when the loss of cattle is severe. Gardeners in Berār will not inform against a tiger or leopard which may have taken refuge in their plantation, for they believe that a garden-plot ceases to produce from the moment one of these animals is killed there.[2] In Nepāl an annual rite of propitiating tigers, known as the Bāgh Jātra, 'tiger feast', used to be performed on the 2nd day of Bhādon (August–September) when dancers marked as tigers performed, but now this takes the form of the Gāi Jātra or 'cow festival'.[3]

Most parts of a tiger—the fangs, claws, whiskers—are potent as love-charms or as prophylactics against demons or the Evil Eye. The milk of a tiger is highly valued, and in many folk-tales one of the tasks imposed on the hero is to find it.[4] The fat is valued as an ointment in cases of rheumatism and similar maladies, the heart and flesh are used as tonics, stimulants, or aphrodisiacs, and communicate the strength and courage of the animal to those who use them. Miris in Assam believe that the flesh gives them strength and courage, but it is not suited to women as it makes them strong-minded.[5] In Bombay the flesh of tigers, leopards, and bears is taken medicinally; a tiger's or leopard's gall-bag, clavicle, fat, milk, and urine are valued, and a tiger's tooth ground to powder is administered to weakly children.[6] In the Central Provinces the tongue is a powerful tonic for children, and Khatris in the Panjab keep a little dried tiger's flesh which they burn near a child suffering from small-pox.[7] When a tiger is shot the coolies must be carefully watched lest they steal the whiskers, claws, or rudimentary clavicles, known as Santosh, Santokh, 'happiness', which are powerful amulets. It is generally believed that tigers get a new lobe to their livers every year, and though anatomists do not admit the fact, it was found that the number

[1] Mills, 66. [2] Lyall, *Gaz.* 61 f. [3] Wright, 38.
[4] Knowles, 3, 45. [5] Dalton, 33. [6] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 47.
[7] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 564; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 254.

of the lobes varied in different animals, and was greatest when other indications of age existed.[1] Combined with holy grasses and vermilion, the whiskers and parings of a tiger's claws are hung on the necks or upper arms of children to protect them from spirit dangers, and the flesh is burnt in the cowshed to check murrain, or in the fields to save the crops from blight. Tigers are said to have at the tips of their tails a horny dermal structure like a claw or nail, which peasants compare to the sting of the scorpion, and it is proverbial that this may cause a man to lose his life. This has passed into western folk-lore in the tale of the Mantichoras, Persian Mardumkhwār, based on the narrative of Ctesias.[2]

The tiger is deified, particularly by the jungle tribes who are exposed to its attacks. The culture hero of the Koshti, Marātha weavers, is Mrikanda, who married the daughter of the Sun, and was the first to weave cloth from the fibres of the lotus plant to clothe the nakedness of the gods. He received as his dowry a giant and a tiger. The giant being disobedient Mrikanda slew him, and from his bones fashioned the first weaver's loom, and sweepers say that the first winnowing-fan and sieve were made from bones and sinews. The tiger remained obedient to Mrikanda, and Koshtis think that he respects them and their descendants, so that if a Koshti meets a tiger in the jungle and mentions the name of Mrikanda the tiger will pass by and will not molest him. No Koshti has ever been killed by a tiger, and in return they will not kill him; at their marriages their Bhīl or genealogist shows a picture of a tiger attached to his sacred scroll, which Koshtis worship. They worship the Mother goddess as Sinhavāhīnī, 'she who rides a tiger', and was herself a tigress.[3] She is the Vāghāi Devi of Berār, to whom an altar was raised on the spot where a Gond woman, seized by a tiger, was rescued in some supernatural way, and the Vaghaiha Kunwar, 'tiger prince', of the Bhīls, to whom fruit, wine, and sheep are offered.[4] Korkus in Hoshangabad worship Bāghdeo, whose priest is a Bhomka:

'on him devolves the dangerous duty of keeping tigers out of the boundaries. When a tiger visits a village the Bhomka

[1] Sanderson, *Thirteen Years among the Wild Beasts of India*, 273.
[2] Frazer, *Pausanias*, v. 86 f.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 581 f.
[4] Lyall, *Gaz.* 191 f.; Luard, *Eth. Surv.*, art. 'Bhīl', 29.

repairs to Bāghdeo, makes his offering to the god, and promises to repeat it for so many years on condition that the tiger does not reappear for that time. The tiger on his part never fails to fulfil the contract thus solemnly made by his lord, for he is pre-eminently an honourable and upright beast, pious withal, and not faithless and treacherous like the leopard, whom no compact can bind.'

It is averred that a Bhomka has been seen muttering his incantations over two or three tigers as they crouched before him. Still more mysterious was the power of another who had a large Sāj or teak tree, into which with the recital of spells he would drive a nail, and the tiger would come and ratify the contract by scoring the bark with his paw. But he died through misplaced confidence in a faithless tiger.[1] Kunbis in the Central Provinces, if a man is killed by a tiger, deify him under the name of Bāghobadeo.[2] Tekha-rho, the tiger godling of the Angāmi Nāgas, is held responsible for the safety of people wandering in the jungle, and avenges the deaths of tigers and leopards killed by men, if the dead animal is not prevented from telling the name of the man who killed it. This is effected by wedging open the mouth of the dead tiger with a piece of wood and putting its head in a stream away from the village. If the tiger tries to tell Tekha-rho who killed it, all the godling can hear is a meaningless gurgling in the water.[3]

The dog was probably the earliest animal domesticated by man, and hence, on the one hand, he ranks as the friendly companion of his owner, while he is also regarded as a foul beast, the eater of corpses. In the latter class are the Sārameya, the two brindled Vedic hounds of Yama, god of death; the Rākshasa demons take the forms of dogs, vultures, or owls, and fly about like night birds.[4] In Persia the Parsis are said to have adopted the Musalmān view of the dog and shrink from it, while the original belief was that he was one of the good things created by Ahura Mazda.[5] But the Indian Parsis bring the dog into close association with the dead. During the funeral they perform the Sagdīd, 'dog seeing', rite by bringing a dog to look on the face of the corpse and by laying food outside for dogs to eat. If a dog is not procurable, flesh-devouring birds

[1] Elliott, *S. R.* 255 f. [2] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 39. [3] Hutton, *Angami*, 182.
[4] Macdonell, *V. M.* 151, 163, 173. [5] Sykes, i. 108 f.

should be allowed to see the corpse.[1] Parsis explain that the intention of the rite is that it is a symbol that the soul of the dead man is then given over to the god of death and his followers, like the dogs of Yama, or that the intention is to destroy the impurity inherent in the corpse.[2] Others, however, adopt the view, repudiated by Parsis, that the display of the corpse to a dog is a substitution for its being devoured by dogs, and that the cooked food left outside the house for them takes the place of the flesh of the corpse, when dogs no longer have access to the Towers of Silence; others argue that the dog is supposed to drive away evil spirits from the corpse.[3] Among some of the Assam tribes we meet cases of dog sacrifice. Gāros suppose that a dog guides the spirit of the dead man to Chikmang, the place where the dead abide, and a dog is killed, placed under the bier, and buried with the corpse; when Lhota Nāgas are rebuilding the Bachelors' Hall the chief warrior kills a dog by splitting its skull with a single blow of his dao knife, and they sometimes leave the body to rot near the main post of the building.[4]

The classical case of devotion to a dog is that of Yudhisthira in the Mahābhārata. When the Pāndavas returned to the Himalaya on their way to the heaven of Indra on Mount Meru, Yudhisthira with his dog went alone to the gate and refused to enter unless his brothers and Draupadi, their common spouse, were admitted. When he was assured that they were already there, in spite of the objection of Indra he insisted that never, come weal or come woe, would he enter without his faithful dog. His claim is allowed, but he was deceived by the god, for he finds there Duryodhana and his enemies, but not his brothers and Draupadi.

Respect for the dog is naturally most common among the hunting and pastoral tribes. Bhīls favour both horse and dog, and those of the Dog sept make an image of the dog in flour, cook it, worship it, and then eat it, possibly as a form of totemistic communal sacrifice.[5] After a successful expedition Mālers

[1] *E. R. E.* iv. 503.
[2] Geiger, *Civilization of Eastern Iranians*, i. 87; Dosabhai Framji, i. 197; *E. R. E.* x. 492. [3] Russell, *T. C.* i. 300; *B. G.* ix, part ii, 240.
[4] Playfair, 102, 109; Mills, 27 f., 157.
[5] *B. G.* xii. 86; Luard, *Eth. Surv.*, art. 'Bhil', 69.

in Bengal make a thank-offering to Autga, godling of hunting, and fine any one who kills a hunting dog; Mahārs in the Central Provinces hold the dog sacred, do not swear by its [illegible] or injure it, and if a dog has a litter of puppies or a cat kittens in his house the owner is expelled from caste and must pay a penalty before he is readmitted.[1] The dog, as we have seen, is the companion of Bhairon,[2] and Chamārs in the United Provinces associate it with the death god; a black dog is propitiated as a Jinn or evil spirit, its grave is sometimes honoured, its secretions are used to scare demons, and it is fed to save children from dog-bites and other disease; the Janwār branch of the caste worship the dog's halter and consider it an act of sacrilege for tying up a dog, 'because the dog is impure', rather perhaps because it is sacrosanct.[3] In the Central Provinces an Agaria is excommunicated if he kills a dog or a cat, and the jungle-living Pārdhis, who regard the dog as a fellow hunter, will never sell or kill a dog, and they extend this feeling to the wild dog (*Cyon dakhunensis*), which they will not hunt even if money be offered to them.[4] Kois, a wild tribe on the Godavari, call the wild dog the Dūta or messengers of the Pāndava brethren, will never kill it even if it attacks a favourite calf, and will not interfere with it if it wishes to feast on their cattle.[5] Bauris in Bengal are excluded from caste if they kill a heron or a dog:

'in regard to dogs I was gravely informed by some of their elders that as they killed and ate cows and other animals, they thought it right to fix on some beast which should be as sacred to them as the cow is to the Brahman, and they selected the dog because it was a useful animal when alive and not very nice to eat when dead—a neat reconciliation of the twingings of conscience and the cravings of appetite.'

On this it has been remarked that this shows that their own customs had become unintelligible to them, and illustrates a tendency to imitate Brahmanical usages.[6] It might have been suggested that these taboos were totemistic, but there seems to be no evidence of this in the present constitution of the caste.

[1] Begbie-Nelson, i. 117.
[2] p. 96 above.
[3] Briggs, 23, 124.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 7, iv. 362, 377.
[5] *Ind. Ant.* v. 359; Thurston, *T. C.* iv. 56.
[6] Dalton, 327; Risley, *T. C.* i. 79 f.

It may be remarked that it is part of the Brahman's daily worship to throw rice and bread to a dog, saying, 'I give food to the two dogs of Yama, that they may perfect me on my way to his kingdom.[1]

The taboo and belief in the 'impurity' of the dog, observed by some classes of the people, seem to be based on the conception of it as a 'sacred' animal, the touch of which is a source of danger. Musalmāns, as a rule, observe the taboo, and exclude them from any place where a crisis is in progress, such as the lying-in room.[2] A Dheda scavenger who touches a dead dog, like a Chamār, is excluded from caste; Sonjharas never keep dogs, are defiled from touching them, and their contact, like that of cats, renders food uneatable.[3] The 'sanctity' of the dog is shown by the fact that Bhīls swear by it; Kurmis by a dog or pig; the Mahārs' most solemn oath is by a cat or dog, sometimes by a dog of black colour: Bulāhis consider the dog and bear 'sacred', and their strongest oath is by one of these animals.[4] On the other hand, the dog and cat are so 'sacred' to the Kolām that he does not dare to swear by either, and if he kills one he is expelled from caste.[5] The early domestication and close association of these animals with man are probably the cause of these taboos.

Besides Bhairon, Khandoba, the chief guardian godling in the Deccan, is closely connected with the dog; in fact, he may have been originally a 'sacred' dog. The attendants at his shrine, known as Vāghyas, 'tigers', try to assimilate themselves to their lord by barking like dogs when pilgrims visit his shrine at Jejuri in the Poona District.[6] The change in feeling towards dogs is shown by the fact that in the Vedic period, while the house or hunting dog seems to have been respected, in other cases it is held to be unfit for sacrifice, to be unclean, and it is driven from the altar; to eat its flesh was the last resort of despair and hunger; in later days Svapāka, 'a cooker of dogs', was a term applied to the lowest outcastes, like the Chandāla.[7]

[1] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 238.
[2] Ja'far Sharīf, 22, 24, 50, 219.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 340; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 421, iv. 512.
[4] *J. R. A. I.* ix. 399; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 289, iii. 301, iv. 97, 141.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 526.
[6] Grant Duff, i, Introd. li ff.; *B. G.* xviii, part iii, 138, xxii. 142: cf Russell, *T. C.* iv. 603 ff.
[7] Macdonell–Keith, ii. 406; *J. R. A. S.* 1910, pp. 219 f.

The eating of dogs' flesh is now confined to some of the Assam tribes. Some Angāmi Nāgas eat dogs, particularly at the taboo festival to secure good health for the coming year, which suggests that there was originally some magical or religious motive at the root of the practice; one group of them say that they sacrifice and eat dogs because they are the most cunning of all beasts, and that it is preferred by the Evil One as a sacrifice, but others consider dogs' meat to be an excellent tonic and pick-me-up for an invalid.[1] The Sema also regard it as a tonic, and in the Gāro markets scores of puppies are sold for food, but they are generally sacrificed before being eaten, which confirms the motives suggested to explain the custom.[2] Nāgas in Manipur forbid only a few persons or sections of villages to eat dog, but no headman is allowed to touch it, and in some villages unmarried girls may not eat dog or the flesh of any male animal.[3]

Monuments erected to brave house dogs illustrate the respect attached to them. At Lohāru, one of the Panjab Native States, there is the grave of a heroic dog, buried on the spot where he was killed after performing noble service, and the grave has become a scene of worship.[4] Near Bulandshahr in the United Provinces are the graves of three saints and their favourite dog which are much respected by Musalmāns.[5] The same motif appears in the world-wide tale of Bethgellert, of which many versions are current in Northern India. The tale usually runs that the dog was the property of a Banya or Banjāra merchant who mortgaged him to another as security for a debt. The new owner was robbed and the dog traced the stolen goods, on which in gratitude he sent him back to his old master with a paper tied round his neck stating that the debt had been satisfied by his services. When the dog returned his master upbraided him for deserting his post and put him to death without reading the paper. He was stricken with remorse when he discovered the fidelity of the noble animal. In the version in the Panchatantra the faithful animal is an ichneumon and the enemy killed by him a serpent.[6] Two temples have been erected in the Central

[1] Hutton, *Angami*, 204.
[2] *Id.*, *Sema*, 104; Playfair, 50.
[3] Hodson, *Nagas*, 182.
[4] *A. S. R.* xxiii. 26.
[5] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 118.
[6] *P. N. Q.* iii. 85 f., 148, iv. 46, 150, 173; Bray, *C. R.* i. 63 f.; Knowles, 36, 429; Somadeva, ii. 90; for other references see Frazer, *Pausanias*, v. 421 f.

Provinces, and one in Kāthiawār contains images of the faithful animal.[1]

The goat, from its uncanny ways and appearance, and its curious habit of shivering, attributed to some spirit possessing it, is also 'sacred'.[2] Kāfirs in the Hindu Kush, the Thugs and Kallans of Madras pour water down its spine and into its ear to ensure that a goat or sheep intended for sacrifice shall indicate its acceptance by the deity by shaking its body and shivering.[3] In the northern plains the village priest leads a goat along a disputed boundary, and the place where it shivers marks the proper line. It is the favourite animal for sacrifice to the village godlings and to the gods who have been absorbed into Brahmanism from the lower cultures.[4] An exceptionally brutal form of sacrificing the animal is found at the temple of Ambāmāi, the Mother goddess, in the Sholapur District. A great fire is lighted at a pit near the altar, the Badva officiant worships it with an offering of turmeric and vermilion, throws a coco-nut or pumpkin into it, and then the user of the temple flings a live kid into the flames, having previously worshipped the victim at his home, and others do the same in performance of vows.[5] In the Panjab it is believed that when a goat kills a snake it eats it and ruminates, after which it spits out a Manka or bead possessing magical powers. When applied to a snake-bite it absorbs the venom and swells; if it is then put in some milk the poison drops out of it like blood and the patient is cured; if it is not put in milk it will burst in pieces.[6] A common remedy to cure disease of the spleen is to take that of a he-goat, if the patient be a male, of a she-goat for a female; this is rubbed on the region of the patient's spleen seven times on a Sunday or Tuesday, pierced with acacia thorns, and hung on a tree; as the goat's spleen dries up, that of the patient is reduced.

Devotion to the cow is a predominant feature in Hinduism, and in spite of the spread of modern ideas it shows little signs of disappearing. From time to time at Hindu sacred places and even in ordinary bazars when popular excitement is

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 189 f.; *B. G.* viii. 641 f. [2] See Kipling, 87 ff.
[3] Robertson, 423; Thornton, 68 f.; Thurston, *T. C.* iii. 87: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 384 f.
[4] p. 104 above. [5] *B. G.* xx. 444. [6] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 15.

aroused by the preaching of some fanatic, the slaughter of a cow drives the populace into a state of frenzy. Some thirty years ago a dangerous agitation arose in the eastern Districts of the United Provinces and in Bihār to prohibit cow-slaughter, and trouble has from time to time arisen between Hindus and Musalmāns over the sacrifice of cows by the latter at the festival of the Bagar 'Īd or 'Īdu-z-zoha.[1] In British India the Government is faced with the difficulty that prohibition of cow-slaughter would deprive the Christians, Musalmāns, and lower Hindu castes of an important source of food supply. But in some Native States, like Nepāl, Rajputana, and Kashmīr, it is prohibited, and in the case of Cutch we assented by treaty to its prohibition, while in other cases cessions of territory have been offered on condition that it was forbidden.[2]

The veneration of the cow begins with its domestication in the pastoral stage, and there is some force in the explanation that it is based on its value as a producer of milk and of the ox as a plough animal. The use of its five products in public and domestic rites gained for it the support of Brahmans. The animal was held 'sacred' from early times, and further evidence of this may be traced in the taboo on the use of milk by tribes like the Shin Dards of Kashmīr, some of the Assam tribes, and Kols and Hos. But in ancient times the cow was sacrificed and beef was eaten.[3] The rite of rebirth through the cow as a means of securing purification is more common in Southern than in Northern India. One of the Tanjore chiefs was advised, as a means of freeing himself from the guilt of betraying Madura, to be born again by passing through a cow made of bronze. The wife of the Brahman Guru received him at the exit in her arms, rocked him on her knees, laid him on her breast, while he tried to cry like a baby.[4] A similar rite was performed, known as Dikshanīyeshti, 'consecration, initiation', when a man leaves his native country in quest of a new land, and was, as it were, reborn, all the processes of birth being represented; for instance, he was wrapped in a cloth as if in the

[1] Ja'far Sharīf, 214 ff.
[2] Crooke, 'The Veneration of the Cow in India', *Folk-lore*, xxiii. 275 ff.
[3] Macdonell–Keith, i. 233, ii. 145 ff.; Rajendralala Mitra, i. 354 ff.
[4] Thurston, *Notes*, 271 f.; Gait, *Hist. Assam*, 351; Manucci, iii. 274 f.; cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 113.

womb.[1] When a Korku in the Central Provinces commits a grievous offence against tribal usage he is placed inside a large earthen pot which is sealed up, and when taken out he is said to be born again from his mother's womb. He is also buried in sand and comes out as a new incarnation from the earth; he is placed in a grass hut which is set on fire; he is immersed in water, the tuft is cut from his scalplock, he is fined two and a half rupees, and thus purified.[2]

In the orthodox ritual, after a death it is customary to give away a cow, known as Vaitarani-dhenu, because it secures his passage, as he holds on to its tail, over the Vaitarani, now identified with the Baitarani in Keonjhar State, Orissa, 'the river to be crossed', which the soul must pass on its way to Deathland.[3] The worship of the cow is part of many Hindu rites. At the Srāddha or mind-rite of the dead grass is presented to her, earth touched by her feet is used for the sick man's bath, at alms-giving she is offered sweetmeats and her forehead is marked with saffron; pious women bow before her on the 4th of the dark fortnight of Sāvan (July–August), and in Bhādon (August–September) she is carried with her calf in procession.[4] As we have seen, the marriage of a bull and heifer is part of the funeral rites.

The bull as the type of courage, strength, and virility became in the form of Nandi associated with Siva, a god of fertility. Basava, Vrishabha, 'the bull', was the traditional founder of the Lingāyat sect, a movement opposed to Brahmanism, in the Deccan, and he is said to have been an incarnation of Nandi, sent to earth to revive the declining Saiva worship.[5]

The ox is venerated at the Akhtīj festival, the beginning of the ploughing season, painted, decorated, and presented with special food. The bull's holy day is the Bol Chauth, 4th of the dark fortnight of Sāvan, when women fast till they have offered sandalwood and flowers to a white cow and red bull, and have

[1] Kunte, 529 f.; R. W. Frazer, 79 f.; Haug, *Aitareya Brahmana*, 8.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 568.
[3] Colebrooke, 111; *I. G. I.* vi. 218 f.; Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 141, 161 f.
[4] Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 161, 214, 273, 311 ff.; *B. G.* ix, part i, 372 ff.
[5] *B. G.* i, part ii, 478; Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 348; Crooke, 'Bull-baiting, Bull-racing, Bull-fights', *Folk-lore*, xxviii. 141 f.

walked five times round them.[1] Banjāras lead a sick man to their sacred bullock, known as Hatādiya, 'that which it is an extra sin to slay', devoted to their godling Bālaji. No load is never laid on his back, he is decorated with silken streamers and cowry shells, he moves at the head of the convoy, and when he is tired the place where he lies down is the halting-place for the day; they make vows at his feet when trouble overtakes them, and trust to him for the cure of illness of men or cattle.[2]

The buffalo, from its black colour, brutish appearance, and dangerous temper, is naturally the type of death and the 'vehicle' of Yama, a belief which has apparently been borrowed from the Hindus by one of the Nāga tribes, who think that the living should provide a buffalo for the funeral feast, so that by its aid the ghost may force the mighty doors of the other world.[3] Devi has gained the title of Mahishamardini, 'destroyer of the buffalo or death demon', Mahishāsura, who has given the name to Mysore, and the buffalo is a victim often sacrificed to the Mother goddesses. It is believed that Bhainsāsura, the modern form of Mahishāsura, lives in the fields; he is worshipped when the rice is turning into ear, and if the farmer thinks he is likely to be malevolent he offers a pig to him. When the standing corn is beaten down by the wind they suppose that Bhainsāsura has been trampling it. He steals the cut corn lying in the fields, and if he does not get his share he is heard crying that his provision for the year has been lost.[4] Pious Hindus should not keep a buffalo for carting or ploughing, because it is associated with Yama; but the Basdeva wandering beggars in the Deccan specially venerate it because they make their living from these animals, and money cannot induce them to provide a calf to be used as a bait for a tiger.[5]

The black buck or Indian antelope (*Cervi capra*) was the holy animal of the Indo-Aryans. Āryavarta, the Holy Land, being defined as that in which it roamed, the hide became a symbol of Brahmanical worship and culture, on it Brahmans sit during worship, and it was the dress of the ancient students; after

[1] *B. G.* ix, part i, 374 f.
[2] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 156.
[3] See Smith, *H. F. A.*, plate lxviii, p. 336; Hodson, *Nagas*, 160.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 86: for the Corn Spirit in buffalo form, Frazer, *G. B.* Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', i. 289.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 207.

the thread-girding or initiation rite a whole skin of an antelope should be given to the boy, but now only a small piece is hung round his neck.[1]

A distinction is drawn between the wild and the domestic pig, the latter an impure animal, the former pure, ceremonially hunted by Rājputs as representing Gauri, Devi the Mother goddess in her benign form, and the flesh is sacramentally eaten.[2] Buddha died, not from a surfeit of pork from a village pig, nor of mushrooms, but of the dried flesh or titbits of a wild boar which as a Kshatriya he was allowed to eat.[3] The boar was 'sacred to the Semites' probably because it was a pre-Semitic sacrificial animal, and among modern high-caste Hindus the taboo has been reinforced by its habit of foul feeding and its use for food and sacrifice by the menial castes.[4] In Ajmer it is believed that a man who kills a wild boar dies immediately; one section of Bhīls take their name from it, never kill or eat it, and worship its effigy at marriage; Korkus worship the pig, and Kurmis take oaths by it.[5]

The elephant is a wise, 'sacred' animal, and Ganesa or Ganpati, god of enterprise, wears an elephant's head, that is, he was originally an elephant. Each of the eight Lokapālas, or guardians of the quarters of the world, has his own elephant, that of Indra, Airāvata, 'possessed of or proceeding from water', being best known, and from them all the elephants in the world are said to have sprung.[6] Elephant figures are a favourite form of decoration, and some of those on sacred buildings possessed magical powers, like those on the Ajanta caves which used to utter a great cry and cause the earth to quake.[7] Kandhs conceived the Earth Mother in elephant form, a human victim was fastened to the proboscis of a wooden elephant, and as he was whirled round the crowd used to cut pieces of flesh from his body as long as life remained; the only surviving example is now in the

[1] Manu, *Laws*, ii. 23, 42; *Satapatha Brāhmana*, *S. B. E.* xii. 23, xli. 215; Mrs. Stevenson, *Rites*, 40, 93, 104, 215.

[2] Tod, i. 80 f., ii. 661, iii. 1381.

[3] Kern, 42 f.; *J. R. A. S.* 1906, p. 658 note, 881; Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, 80.

[4] R. Smith, 153, 448; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 8 ff.; *E. R. E.* x. 487.

[5] *A. S. R.* vi. 137; Luard, *Eth. Surv.*, art. 'Bhīl', 96; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 553, iv. 97.

[6] *Aīn-i-Akbari*, i. 121.

[7] Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, ii. 259.

Madras Museum.[1] The elephant is said to possess in his forehead the Kunjaramani or Gajamukta, a pearl which possesses magical powers; the animal selects the heir to a kingdom by lifting him with his trunk; it is the counterpart of the Horse of Troy from which armed warriors come and surprise a Raja; it can fly through the air.[2] The hair of an elephant's tail is in high repute as an amulet, and little children, when an elephant passes through a village, pat the dust where its feet have rested and sing, 'Give us a hair, Elephant, like a sword of gold!'

In the Fatehpur District, United Provinces, there is a stone elephant. It is said that the famous Jaichand, Raja of Kanauj, offered to the Rishi Parāsara as many villages as an elephant could walk round. It traversed an enormous area, and finally sat down at this place, where it was turned into stone.

The cat, as a household animal, generally enjoys a good reputation. The Prophet said, 'Cats are not impure, they keep watch round us', but as they are believed to possess magical powers they are suspect by Indo-Musalmāns, and are not allowed to enter the delivery room, to approach a boy after circumcision or a spirit medium, and their blood is used in Black Magic.[3] Hindus generally consider a cat pure, and its touch does not defile a Brahman, even after he has bathed and is doing worship, for, as they say, since it eats with its eyes closed, it cannot bear witness to his good or bad deeds at the Last Day; but witches are apt to take the form of cats; its dung scares evil spirits, and if four persons are sitting on a bed and a cat passes under it, one of them is safe to be possessed by a demon.[4] A Jāt in the Central Provinces who kills a cat is dealt with as severely as if he killed a cow or squirrel, but to slay a dog involves no sin, and if a Māl in Bengal kills a cat he must give a little salt to every child in the village.[5] Killing a cat is a serious sin for a Brahman, for once upon a time Siva-Mahādeva and Pārvati were gambling and when Pārvati was losing she called her son Ganesa, who made his rat disturb the dice in her favour with its tail. Mahādeva was wroth and sent for his cat-faced demon to kill

[1] J. Campbell, 51; Thurston, *Notes*, 511, 514 f.
[2] Somadeva, i. 73, 177, ii. 102, 328; Hartland, *Ritual and Belief*, 303 ff.; Temple–Steel, 426.
[3] Ja'far Sharīf, 24, 50, 217, 266.
[4] *B. G.* ix, part i, 377.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 237; Dalton, 269.

the rat, because he was afraid lest Ganesa should take his revenge. But Mahādeva promised immunity to the demon and all his descendants, so no one dares to kill a cat.[1] It is reported from Bengal that some fifty years ago a mock marriage of a dancing girl with a cat was celebrated.[2] To settle a dispute Nāgas in Manipur put a live cat in a basket which each party seizes, and at a signal a third man hacks the cat in two, and the disputants cut it up with their swords, taking care that the weapons are stained with the blood. This is said to be a sort of treaty or peace-making, in which the slaughter of the cat binds them by a kind of covenant; the cat is the only animal which they bury, they may not eat it because the man who dares to do so loses his power of speech, and to take a false oath over a cat brings sudden death or misfortune.[3]

The rat is the companion of Ganesa, in part a deified elephant, in part a rat, the latter propitiated for the preservation of the corn, as a hint to other members of the species to abstain from mischief as they are under divine control.[4] The lower castes in Bombay think it unlucky to call a rat by its name and speak of it euphemistically as Undir Māma, 'rat maternal uncle'; it is a sin to kill a rat; when they give trouble in a house women vow to give them sweetmeats if they cease to annoy, and this has generally the desired effect; rats are fed at the Ganesa Chaturthi festival already described.[5] In a chapel at Lhasa

'tame mice ran unmolested over the floor feeding on the cake and grain offerings, under the altar and amongst the dress of the images, and up and down the bodies of the monks who were chanting the litany, and were said to be transmigrated nuns and monks; these attendants, however, of the disease-giving goddess, it seems to me, may represent the mouse which is constantly figured with Smintheus Apollo when he showered the darts of pestilence among the Greeks, and which has been regarded by some as a diffusive agent of the plague'.[6]

Articles, such as clothes, gnawed by mice and rats, are unlucky, and the Indian story of the ploughshare gnawed by rats has

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 112: cf. Temple, *Legends*, i. 48.

[2] O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 325.

[3] Hodson, *Nagas*, 111.

[4] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', ii. 282 ff.; *E. R. E.* vi. 404.

[5] Campbell, *Notes*, 267; p. 37 above.

[6] Waddell, *Lhasa*, 370 f.; Stein, *Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan*, 180: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', ii. 282 f.

remarkable parallels in classical literature.[1] At the shrine of Shāh Daula in the Gujarāt District, Panjab, a number of remarkable microcephalous idiots, known as the 'Rats' of the saint, may be seen.[2]

The pretty little palm squirrel (*Sciurus palmarum*), one of the best-known Indian mammals because it frequents verandahs of houses, is called the Bhagat or Saint of Rāma, because when the demi-god was building the bridge across the strait to Lanka or Ceylon, the squirrel helped him by shaking dust from his tail. This so pleased Rāma that he stroked its back and formed the black stripes which he bears to this day. If any one kills a squirrel he can he purged from the sin only by making an image of the beast in gold and presenting it to a Brahman. Even the menial tribes, who eat almost any animal, will not touch the squirrel. The respect for it has been attributed to totemism, but its house-haunting instincts are probably sufficient to account for it.

The bear, from his semi-human ways and the horrid scream it utters when wounded, is 'sacred', a scarer of disease, sickly children are taken for a ride on its back, and its hair is worn round their necks. The seeds of the umbrella-bearing palm, known as Bajarbattu, already mentioned, are used as amulets and gain additional power if they are put first into a bear's mouth.[3] It has been suggested that Rikhmun, the godling of the Bengal Bhuiyas, has taken his name from Rikshmuni, 'bear saint', but this is doubtful.[4] As the bear is semi-human, Uriyas believe that the souls of their ancestors inhabit bears and will not kill them; Balāhis of the Central Provinces consider an oath by a bear binding.[5] The Baloch object to speak freely about the black bear which appears as a lovely woman at night and hugs the unwary to death, but by day it is nothing but a bear.[6] Jāmbavat, king of the bears, helped Hanumān, the ape godling, in his campaign with Rāma to recover Sītā. The tale of his gem, the Syamantaka, has been told elsewhere.[7]

[1] *Jātaka*, i. 215, ii. 127.
[2] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 630 ff.; *J. R. A. S.* 1896, p. 574 f.; *P. N. Q.* ii. 27, iii. 27 ff.; *N. I. N. Q.* v. 114; Manucci, i. 117, 119.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 378.
[4] Risley, *T. C.* i. 112.
[5] Rice, 42; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 107.
[6] *Folk-lore*, xiii. 265.
[7] *Vishnu Purāna*, 425 ff.; p. 174 above.

The jackal and hyena are uncanny because they howl at night and devour corpses. The jackal pack is supposed to howl only at each watch of the night, when the leader cries, 'I am King of Delhi,' thrice, and his comrades say, 'Ho! ho! so! Yes! of course you are.' In the folk-tales the jackal takes the place of the fox in European tradition as the cunning animal.[1] Badhaks and other predatory classes pay much heed to omens from the cry of a night-wanderer like the jackal, and there is some reason for holding that eating of its flesh is part of the rite by which outsiders are admitted into the community.[2] From ancient times the blood of the hyena was held in repute in folk-medicine.[3]

The hare is an uncanny animal in the lower culture, possibly owing to the prominence of its eyes. It is associated with the spots in the moon.[4] Sweepers will not eat its flesh because it is said to have suckled their saint, Lāl Beg, and Shī'a Musalmāns will not touch it because the blood, a forbidden food, cannot, they think, be separated from its flesh.[5] Panjabis keep hare's blood coagulated on a piece of cotton, and because it is a speedy animal use it as a medicine, especially for the cure of fits.[6] A Kunbi boy in the Deccan when he is ten or twelve years old is, possibly for the same reason, branded on one or both hands as an initiation to the work of a cowherd, the branding being done by placing burning pellets of hare's dung on his wrists.[7]

Among birds the common black crow is uncanny because portions of the Pinda or balls offered at the funeral rites are thrown to crows, and if they eat them the spirits of the dead are supposed to be satisfied. It has been suggested that this belief is due to the widespread theory that the crow lives a thousand years, truly 'many-wintered', and never dies of disease but as the result of accident or violence.[8] But the funereal appearance of the bird, and its habit of frequenting houses, burial places, and cremation grounds are probably at the root of the matter, and suggest its identification with the spirits of the dead. A tale is told of a wicked hunter who was killed by a tiger and his spirit became a malevolent Bhūt, until a crow picked up one of his bones and dropped it in the Ganges,

[1] Somadeva, ii. 28. [2] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 59. [3] Bana, 230.
[4] p. 38 above. [5] Macauliffe, v. 152; Crooke, *T. C.* i. 272.
[6] *P. N. Q.* ii. 43. [7] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 293. [8] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 37.

when the sinner was caught up in a chariot to heaven.[1] Another story tells that crows were once white, but Raja Chānakya induced them to go to Yama and ascertain his plans about the [illegible]a's soul. They advised him to sail down the Narbada in a boat with black sails, and when these became white he might be assured that he had reached Suklatīrtha, 'the bright place of pilgrimage', in the Broach District, where he would obtain redemption. So he was saved, but Yama was so wroth at his escape that he passed all his sins on to the crow, and they have been black ever since.[2] It is believed that a crow has only one eye which he shifts from one socket to another as he finds it convenient, and so unlucky is the bird that if a woman drops a handkerchief and a crow carries it off, if she recovers it she will never use it again but gives it to a beggar.[3] Crows, again, grow weak at each of the three watches of the night and then eat a lamp-wick as a tonic.[4] As crows are so long-lived, it is only natural that their brains are a specific against old age. If a woman whose husband is absent says 'Shoo!' to a crow which has alighted in her yard, and if it flies away at once, it is a sure sign that her husband will soon return. Every one knows that the cawing of a crow announces the coming of a guest, and burglars carry about with them a stick out of a crow's nest and a piece of charcoal, a form of sympathetic magic, to help them to work in the dark.

The owl, a bird of night, is associated with the goblins of burial and cremation grounds. On the North-West Frontier it is believed that the owl, the fox, the bear, and in particular the monkey, are the abodes of the spirits of the dead, and are therefore unlucky.[5] Lohār blacksmiths in the Central Provinces believe that if the bones of an owl are given to a man to eat he becomes an idiot—another piece of sympathetic magic.[6] You should never call a man by his name when an owl is within hearing, as it will go on repeating the name, and the person who bears it will surely die. An owl's heart is a useful love-charm; if an owl hoots on the roof of a house it will soon become a ruin. Every owl has a bone which possesses the property of making

[1] Monier-Williams, 300; Atkinson, ii. 329; and a tale of the same type in Tod, ii. 1016 f. note.
[2] *B. G.* ii. 568.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 15.
[4] *Jātaka*, i. 113.
[5] Latimer, *C. R.* i. 93.
[6] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 125.

others subservient to him who owns it, and if you can keep an owl awake for two days and a night it will tell you where the bone is to be found. If you put an owl in a room, go in naked, shut the door, and feed the bird with meat all night, you will acquire magical powers. In Gujarāt, if a man takes seven cotton threads, goes to a place where owls are hooting, strips himself naked, ties a knot in the threads at every hoot, and fastens the thread round the right arm of a patient suffering from fever, the disease will leave him.[1]

The domestic fowl is an impure bird because it eats almost anything, and Kunbis in the Deccan require a man who has been touched by one of them to purify himself by bathing, or at least by sprinkling his head with water mixed with cow-dung.[2] In sacrificing a fowl regard must be paid to the deity to whom it is offered. A black chicken is offered to the chthonic powers. Fowls, from their habit of wandering about the house, are occupied by the spirits of the dead, and according to a legend in the Mahābhārata they sprang from the blood of Vritra, the demon of drought. Parsis think that the crowing cock at daybreak scares evil spirits, so they refuse to kill or eat the bird after it has begun to crow, and when a cock or a parrot dies its body is wrapped in a Sudra or sacred sheet, a sacred thread is wound round it, and it is carefully buried.[3]

The Kapota or dove is 'sacred' and therefore occasionally uncanny, as in the Veda, where it is the messenger of Nirriti or Yama, spirit and god of death.[4] It seems possible that the Minoan dove-cult may have passed to the Semites, who connect it with the Muharram mourning festival, and it was sacred to Al-'Uzza, the ancient Meccan idol, the counterpart of the Phoenician Astarte.[5] In India it is the sacred bird of Siva, fed at his temples and provided with food at the public offices in Rajputana, while Musalmāns connect it with the cult of Sakhi Sarwar. Kheshgi Pathans in the Panjab will not kill pigeons, and call them Sayyid or 'lord' of birds. Many of the lower castes in Northern India hang up images of parrots on the

[1] Campbell, *Notes*, 59. [2] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 314.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part ii, 220.
[4] Schrader, 253; Macdonell–Keith, i. 137; Macdonell, *V. M.* 172.
[5] Farnell, *Greece and Babylon*, 72 f.; Barton, 236; R. Smith, *Kinship*, 196 f.; Ja'far Sharif, 165; Frazer, *Pausanias*, iv. 149 f.

marriage shed; and after a Kāyasth or writer's marriage in Gujarāt a Brahman brings two white doves to the bride's house, tied together with a red string round their necks. Bride and bridegroom oil and smooth their feathers, mark their brows with vermilion and grains of rice, the birds being returned to their owner, who is usually a Musalmān, after the rite is done.[1] Gowāri cowherds in the Central Provinces revere the Haryal or green pigeon; they say that it calls as a herdsman does to his cows, that it is their kinsman, and refuse to kill it because their cows go to a tree where it is cooing. Once, like the sacred geese of Rome, it warned the cows when a thief was coming to drive them away.[2]

The Brahmani duck, the ruddy sheldrake, from its solitary habits has become the type of the devoted recluse, and Buddhists represented the Sangha or members of the congregation by a line of these birds carved on the capitals of the Asoka pillars and other buildings; it is also a symbol of conjugal fidelity, and like lovers during the night they call to each other sadly across the sand-flats of the great rivers.[3]

Many other birds are more or less reverenced. The sparrow is the type of amorousness, and at weddings of the mercantile castes a triangle holding mud figures of sparrows or parrots is hung over the bride's door. The blue jay is an auspicious bird among Rājputs, and the cult of it forms part of the rites at the Dasahra festival.[4] Kāthis in Gujarāt feed plovers instead of crows at the funereal rites and have a friendly feeling towards them.[5] The Koīl or 'brain-fever bird', the black cuckoo, is worshipped by women in the rainy season to ensure wedded happiness and long lives for their husbands and children.[6] The peacock is the bird of Kārttikiya, god of war, and was adopted by the Mauryas and Guptas as an emblem on their coinage.[7] It is held sacred by Jāts and Ahīrs, protected in their villages, and sportsmen who shot them have been attacked. Its sanctity among royal houses was due to the belief that any one who ate

[1] *B. G.* ix, part i, 63. [2] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 163.
[3] Waddell, *Buddhism*, 200 note; Fergusson–Burgess, 323; *J. R. A. S.* 1909, pp. 1057 f.: compare the legend in China and Japan, *Nitrongi*, ii. 235; Gray, *China*, i. 193.
[4] *Folk-lore*, xxv. 56 f. [5] *B. G.* ix, part i, 257. [6] *Ibid.* 381.
[7] Grünwedel, 70; *J. R. A. S.* xxi. 21; *B. G.* i, part i, 135.

its head became a Raja, and those who eat its flesh become young and immortal, living as long as gold because the bird's colour is golden.[1] In another famous Buddhist story the princess selects the peacock as her husband, but he is so elated that he dances in unseemly fashion and so, like Hippoclides, loses his bride.[2] Peacock's feathers are carried by Jain mendicants, and the Vārlis, a forest tribe, fix them in a brass pot, dance round them, and represent Hirva, their household godling, by a bunch of feathers.[3] In this connexion we may mention the worship of Malak Tāūs, the name of which is popularly derived from Persian *tāūs*, 'a peacock', but may possibly be referred to Tammuz, an object of worship among the Yezidis of Asia Minor.[4] Among the Kandhs the Earth Mother was represented by a peacock.[5] Wizards in the Central Provinces sell the skin of a species of Buceros, known as Dhanchirya, 'bird of wealth', which are hung on houses to bring prosperity, and its thigh bones are fixed on the wrists of children to protect them from demons.[6] The Hudhud or hoopoe appears in Musalmān tradition as the bird that found water for Solomon when he returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, and helped him to discover Bilgīs, Queen of Sheba; in a Hindu tale a prince flew away in bird form with his sister's lute, and she cursed him that he should become a golden-crested bird and remain in that state till he fell into a well and did some service in return to the kindly man who rescued him.[7] The woodpecker, too, wears a royal crest because it was a Raja in a former birth.

Young kites, it is supposed, do not open their eyes till they are shown a piece of gold, and they have good sight. Children with weak eyes are cured by an application of antimony mixed with the yoke of a kite's egg; when sweepers suffer from rheumatism they kill a kite on a Thursday, cut up its bones and wear them over the affected joint so as to regain the swiftness of the bird.[8] A sub-caste of Khatris in the Panjab worship the kite because when all their men died from plague and the race was nearly

[1] *Jātaka*, ii. 25.
[2] *Ibid.* i. 84; Herodotus, vi. 129.
[3] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 188.
[4] Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, 47 f.; *Man*, i. 145 ff.; *E. R. E.* xii. 831; *J. R. A. I.* xli. 200 ff.; *J. R. A. S.* 1921, p. 515.
[5] J. Campbell, 54; Thurston, *Notes*, 511.
[6] Hislop, 6.
[7] Burton, *A. N.* ix. 107; Frazer, *Pausanias*, v. 225; *J. R. A. I.* xxxiii. 89; Somadeva, ii. 105.
[8] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 162.

extinct, a kite with its wings sheltered a boy, the last of his line and son of a pregnant woman who escaped—a tale told of many castes, merely indicating a flaw in the pedigree.[1]

The partridge, it is said, sprang from the skull of the son of Tvastri, architect of the gods, as he was drinking the Soma, and the holy liquid gave its colour, brown, to the bird. When Raja Nala, under the malignant influence of Sani or Saturn, lost all his wealth and was starving he managed to catch a black partridge, but his ill luck again prevailed, and as he was cooking it the bird flew away, but the black marks where its feathers were charred remain to this day. Musalmāns say that it cries, 'Subhān teri qudrat!' 'Great is the power of the Almighty!' because it escaped from the fire.

The parrot is the marriage bird of many low castes, who hang in the marriage shed images of parrots fashioned from the wood of the Semal or cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*). At the Dīvāli or lamp festival in the Central Provinces women of the Ahīr or shepherd caste make a clay image of a parrot, and fix it on a pole round which they sing and dance and receive presents at every house. It has been suggested that their object is to propitiate the bird, representing the spirit of the forest, or because it is most destructive to the crops.[2] In the folk-tales, as in the Tota Kahāni, 'the tale of the parrot', the bird describes the misdoings of the wife to her husband; it is a learned bird and knows the four Vedas, and when a child is slow in learning to speak they give it a grain of rice dropped by this chattering bird.

Birds' eggs are often used in magic and divination,[3] and those of the ostrich or bustard are often hung in mosques, partly as rarities, partly as protectives.[4]

Crocodiles, both the Magar or snub-nosed, and in less degree the Ghariyāl or long-nosed variety, are dreaded from their habit of attacking men and animals. The Makara, a marine monster, half crocodile, half shark, represents the sign Capricornus in the Hindu zodiac; it is the 'vehicle' of Varuna, god of the ocean, its figure is borne on the banner of Kāmadeva, god of love, and river goddesses, like Ganga, are represented riding on

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 528.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 33.
[3] See Index, s.v. Egg.
[4] Ja'far Sharīf, 147; K. D. Erskine, iii A. 207.

crocodiles. From this Makara comes the name of the dreaded Magar. Some of the wilder tribes in Baroda, to avert injury to men and animals as well as sickness, worship Magardeo in the form of a piece of wood shaped like a crocodile and supported on two posts.[1] One sub-caste of Dhīmar fishermen in the Central Provinces must kill and eat a crocodile at their marriage, and the Sonjharas or gold-washers, catch a crocodile alive, worship it, and when the rite is done they let it return to the river.[2] Women in performance of a vow used to throw a first-born son to the crocodiles at the mouth of the Hooghly in the hope that such an offering would secure them additional offspring.[3] Some Musalmāns think it a religious duty to kill the large lizard or chameleon when they see it, because when Abraham was captured by his enemies and they tried to burn him alive, the pile refused to blaze until the lizard came and blew on the flames.[4] At Magar Talāo, 'crocodile tank', near Karachi, in connexion with the cult of the saint Pīr Mango, who caused a stream to trickle out of the rock, tame crocodiles are kept and fed by pilgrims.[5]

Fish are held sacred in many places and protected by a rigid taboo. In the legend of the Great Flood Manu Vaivasvata, as he was washing his hands, found a fish in the water which promised to help him in the coming deluge. Manu first put it into a pot, then as it grew bigger into a dyke, and finally into the ocean. He built a ship, fastened the cable to the fish's horn, and finally tied it to a tree and was saved.[6] In many rivers and tanks at sacred places, like Hardwar and Benares, fish are venerated, fed, and carefully protected.[7] As we have already stated, they are often conceived to be the home of the spirits of the dead.[8] On the death of a prince of Malabar all fishing is temporarily stopped and renewed only after three days, when the spirit of the deceased is supposed to have had time to choose its abode without molestation.[9] At Mandi in the Panjab in the river Beas, 'while standing on iron Victoria Jubilee Bridge you can gaze into the deep green pool below and see the

[1] J. B. Dalal, *C. R.* i. 157.
[2] Russell, *Chhindwāra Gaz.* i. 75.
[3] H. H. Wilson, *Essays*, ii. 166 f.; Ward, ii. 318 f.
[4] Russell, *op. cit.* i. 53.
[5] Burton, *Sind Revisited*, i. 92 ff.; Balfour, *Cyclopaedia*, i. 838 f.
[6] *S. B. E.* xii, part i, 216 ff.; Frazer, *F. L. O. T.* i. 183 ff.
[7] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 76, ii. 57, 93; *B.G.* xviii, part i, 88.
[8] p. 229 above.
[9] Thurston, *T. C.* vii. 291.

great Mahseer swimming lazily along which bears the soul of the Raja's late lamented grandfather in his capacious bosom '.[1] Hence it is the custom to fling to fish in the name of the ancestors little balls of flour with the name of Rāma inscribed on Bhojpatra birch-tree bark, or red paper, each ball being perfumed with eight kinds of scents.[2]

Fish are also revered in connexion with cults or as types of fertility. At Tungnāth by the lower Himalaya in the Sarasvati pool there is a linga in the centre, and a large fish appears on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of every month, oblations to it ensuring that every wish will be accomplished.[3] In the Poona District there is said to be a fish, round like a wheel, which once bit a piece out of the calf of Sītā while she was bathing, and now if you examine its palate you will find a lump of butter; another fish cures impotency; the patient strips off his clothes, grinds some black gram, baits a hook with it, and when he has caught the fish he rubs vermilion on its head and says: 'O fish! I am changing my state for yours by taking the slime from your skin. Accept my offering!' He then removes the slime and when it is dry eats it in the form of pills which restore his strength.[4] On the Bombay coast the sun-fish is offered at Hindu temples, and in Buddhist times fishes were symbols of good luck, little fishes carved in beryl being found in Stupas.[5]

Owing to their prolificacy fish are used in fertility magic at weddings, bride and bridegroom going to a river or tank with a sieve and catching fish, which they bring back to the marriage shed.[6] At a Lohār blacksmith's wedding in the United Provinces an image of a fish made with flour is held by the bride which the bridegroom must pierce with an arrow while she tries to prevent him from doing so by moving it about, and he refuses to enter the house till he succeeds—an obvious form of fertility magic which also appears in early Brahmanical ritual.[7] In the Central Provinces there is a river the fish in which are said to have a gold ring in their mouths and people try to catch them.[8]

Fish play a part in the folk-tales. The heroine spends twelve

[1] Gore, 114. [2] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 130. [3] Atkinson, ii. 775.
[4] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 93. [5] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 56 note; xviii, part i, 93.
[6] Thurston, *T. C.* v. 203: cf. Westermarck, *H. H. M.* ii. 484 f.
[7] Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 377. [8] Russell, *Seoni Gaz.* i. 129.

years in the belly of an enormous fish, while the crow, the jackal, and the snake go down into it to see what is there; Saktideva is swallowed by a fish and released when its belly is opened, and another swallows a ship which is recovered in the same way;[1] it laughs when an innocent Brahman is led to execution because he looked at the Rāni, knowing well that all the Raja's wives are dissolute. Cases in which fish are connected with totemism are not numerous, but the eel is a totem among Mundas, Orāons, and other tribes.[2]

It was in the form of Kūrma, the tortoise, that Vishnu recovered the valuables lost in the Deluge, and in tortoise form he dived into the Sea of Milk and made his back the base or pivot of Mount Mandara with which the gods churned the ocean. Ganrār fishermen in Bengal sacrifice the tortoise to their goddess Khāla Kumāri, 'lady of the creek', the only offering she will accept, and she brings sickness on any one who fails to honour her thus.[3] It seems to have been an old custom to sacrifice a tortoise to the Manu.[4]

The frog as an aquatic animal naturally influences rain. The famous Frog Hymn in the Rigveda, usually interpreted as a satire on the croaking of Brahmans as they recite their charms, is more probably a magical method of rain-making; the frog was invited to the cremation ground to cool the pyre, and it is invoked in the Atharvaveda to check the fire of fever.[5] In the lower Himalaya the Newārs worship the frog to procure rain. This is done on the 7th day of Kārttik (October-November), usually at a pool frequented by frogs, though it is not necessary that a frog should be seen at the time. After washing his face and hands the priest takes five brass bowls, places in each five kinds of offerings in rice, flowers, milk and vermilion, ghi and incense, and water, lights the ghi and incense, and says, 'Hail Paramesvara Bhūminātha! Great Deity! Lord of the Soil! I pray you receive these offerings, send us timely rain, and bless our crops!'[6] The frog, thus regarded, is a giver of fertility,

[1] Steel–Temple, 411; Somadeva, i. 25 f., 207, ii. 599; Knowles, 27, 158.
[2] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 103, 110.
[3] Buchanan, iii. 532.
[4] Somadeva, ii. 271.
[5] Macdonell–Keith, ii. 120 f.
[6] Waddell, *Himalaya*, 315; *Ind. Ant.* xxii. 292 ff.; Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 293 ff.

and a man who kills one never gets married.[1] Frogs are eaten by grooms, Newārs, Khāsis, and Doms.[2]

As regards insects, reference has been made elsewhere to the magical rite of expelling locusts.[3] Respect is paid to white ants on account of their prolificacy and mysterious ways. From early times the earth from an ant-hill has been regarded as specially pure, representing 'the savour of the earth', and it was, and is, used in building altars.[4] The ant-hill gains additional sanctity because it is often the abode of snakes. Dhangar shepherds in the Central Provinces say that the first sheep and goats came out of an ant-hill, and when they began to damage the crops the people complained to Siva Mahādeva who created the first Dhangar to watch the flocks; hence they revere ant-hills, never remove one from their fields, and at the Dīvāli festival worship it with offerings of rice, flowers, and part of a goat's ear.[5] Doubtless its shape, resembling that of the linga, and as an abode of snakes, led to its association with Siva, and it was an ancient custom in Southern India to take sanctuary by embracing an ant-hill.[6] Kandhs swear by the earth of an ant-hill, praying that if they forswear themselves they may be ground to powder like it.[7] It is commonly believed that red ants are Brahmans and the black variety Chamār or currier women, and it is only the former that are fed in the hope of realizing some desire and escaping from some difficulty. It is a common practice of the trading classes, Vaishnavas or Jains, who have a tender regard for animal life, to sprinkle parched grain and sugar accompanied with an elaborate ritual over ants' nests in the hottest time of the day, and white ants are so prolific that they are fed as a fertility charm.[8] When the Makora section of Jāts feed the large ants of that name it may be a trace of totemism.[9]

Other insects are respected. The caterpillar which lives on the leaves of the Madār or great swallow-wort is called

[1] *J. A. S. B.* i. 366.
[2] Gurdon, 51; Cox-Stuart, i. 249; Thurston, *T. C.* i. 49.
[3] p. 274 above.
[4] *S. B. E.* xii. 279.
[5] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 480: cf. Thurston, *T. C.* ii. 256 f., iv. 284.
[6] Thurston, *T. C.* iv. 364; L. Rice, i. 455; Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 305.
[7] Macpherson, 83.
[8] *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 72; *P. N. Q.* ii, 115; Russell, *C. R.* i. 93; Fryer, i. 278.
[9] *Ind. Ant.* xxxii. 202.

'the cow of Rāma', and a species of beetle is known as Indragopa, 'Indra's cowherd'. Insects are sometimes used to remove disease; in the Panjab when you are attacked by fever you are advised to take a spider, cover it with cotton, tie it round your neck, and you will be cured as soon as you forget all about it.[1]

The souls of the dead are often supposed to be embodied in flies and other insects. Mundas think that Sing Bonga sends the soul of a man back to this world, according as his life was good or bad, in the form of a man, a beast, a bird, or an insect.[2] Kunbis in Bombay believe that the soul comes back after the funeral in the guise of an ant or other insect. They watch to see if an insect comes to drink the milk set out in a shell at the place of death, and if it does so they suppose that the soul is happy; but if no insect comes or one departs without drinking they conclude that the soul cannot leave this world on account of some unfulfilled desire or anxiety, and they address it, calling on it to drink quickly and go away, promising at the same time to carry out all its wishes.[3]

Special precautions must be taken regarding the Tassar silkworm, a creature as delicate as the substance which it produces. In Mirzapur when the seed of the silkworm is brought to the house the Kol or Bhuiyār priest puts it in a place which has been carefully purified by daubing it with cow-dung. From that time the householder must be careful to avoid ceremonial impurity, must give up cohabitation with his wife, must not sleep on a bed, must not shave or have his hair cut, must not anoint his body with oil or eat food cooked with ghi, must not tell lies or do anything he thinks wrong. He vows to Singārmati Devi that if the worms are born he will make an offering to her. When the worms appear the women of the house sing as at the birth of a baby, some vermilion, the sign of married life, is smeared on the parting of the hair of all the married women in the village, and the owner feeds his brethren and makes the promised offering to the goddess. Among Dhīmars in the Central Provinces when the worms are living on leaves and spinning their cocoons the men live in the forest for two months and watch them. During this time they eat only once a day,

[1] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 255. [2] Sarat Chandra Roy, 471. [3] *B. G.* xi. 62.

abstain from meat and lentils, and do not cohabit with their wives. When the eggs are to be placed on the tree they tie a silk thread round the first tree to be used and worship it as Pātdeo, godling of the silk thread. After the cocoons are spun and boiled the extracted chrysalids must be eaten by the caretakers, who have to undergo certain ceremonial rites before they are readmitted into the society of their fellows. This, it has been suggested, is a ceremonial observance like that of killing and eating a crocodile at the weddings of members of this caste. Because the caterpillars are killed by the boiling of the cocoons men of high caste will not engage in the business of rearing them.[1] 'The silkworms are treated as far as possible like human beings. Hence the custom which prohibits the commerce of the sexes while the worms are hatching may be only an extension, by analogy, of the rule which is observed by many races, that the husband may not cohabit with his wife during pregnancy.'[2] Or, on the other hand, as coition exhausts the energy of the male, it may be supposed that the act prevents the communication to the caterpillars of the vigour which enables them to produce silk. In Bengal, in addition to precautions of this kind, women are excluded from the silkworm shed.[3] A similar case is that of the Kāthkaris of Bombay who, when they go into the forest to make catechu, hold their encampment 'sacred', allow no one to come near without warning, and before they begin the wood-cutting choose a tree, smear its trunk with vermilion, offer a coco-nut to it, bow before it, and ask it to bless their work.[4] Toda women are not allowed to use the path trodden by the sacred buffaloes nor to enter the holy part of the clearing; Bhīl women take part in the rites of only two of their godlings, and even in these solemnities they merely attend and take no active share in the rites.[5]

[1] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 511 f., 504 f.
[2] Frazer, *G. B.* 'Taboo and Perils of the Soul', 194.
[3] Buchanan, ii. 157.
[4] *B. G.* xiii, part i, 160.
[5] Rivers, 27, 30; Luard, *Eth. Surv.*, art. 'Bhil', 30.

XV

SERPENT WORSHIP

The cult of serpents is widely spread in India, the motive being the fear of these reptiles and their propitiation, resulting from their great numbers and numerous varieties, and the serious loss of life caused by them. The snake is dreaded on account of its stealthy habits and the deadly result of its attacks. Its habit of haunting houses suggests that it is the abode of the spirits of the dead, and its habit of periodically changing its skin leads to the belief that it renews its life from time to time. Here it is necessary only to mention some of the chief snake cults in Northern India and some of the folk-belief associated with snakes.[1]

In Bengal the snake godling Manasā, 'mind, thought', is represented sitting on a water-lily and clothed with snakes. She has four festivals, at three of which she is represented by branches of the Siju or Euphorbia tree, which has the power of repelling snakes, which are planted before the house and worshipped. Her chief festival is held on the last day of the month Sāvan (July–August), the time when snakes are most dreaded, at which her image or a branch of her sacred tree, or a pan of water surrounded by clay images of snakes is worshipped. Some people during these rites play with snakes, particularly the cobra, and in some cases death has ensued unless the fangs have been previously extracted. No fire is kindled during her festival, one of her titles being 'She who does not cook'. In some places crowds assemble in a field near the village, where rice and milk offered to her are then and there consumed by the worshippers, in the hope of preserving their children from snake-bite and helping their ancestors to reach heaven. When an image of Manasā is made sheep, goats, buffaloes, and even pigs are offered to her, the last victim being appropriate to a chthonic power like a snake. When a person is bitten by a

[1] For fuller treatment of the subject see *E. R. E.* xi. 411 ff., and cf. *Ency. Brit.* xxiv. 676 ff.

snake an exorcist recites incantations in the name of Manasā, and when several deaths in succession have occurred from snake-bite there is a general service held in her honour. Her chief devotees are drawn from the Māl, a caste of cultivators and thieves in western and central Bengal.[1]

In other parts of Bengal the snake godling is represented by a pot marked with vermilion and laid under a tree, with clay snakes ranged round it, and a trident, the weapon of Siva, driven into the ground. Sometimes a plant called by her name is her emblem, and sometimes she is worshipped in the form of a small four-armed female of yellow colour, her feet resting on a goose, which is also the 'vehicle' of Brahmā, a cobra in each hand and a tiara of snakes upon her head. Sometimes she abides in the Pīpal tree (*Ficus religiosa*), but in places where snakes abound a house shrine or a special room is dedicated to her. Her plant, the Manasā (*Euphorbia neriifolia*) is planted in the court-yard at the Dasahra festival and worshipped at the Nāgpanchami.[2] Jagadgauri, 'the yellow goddess who maintains the world', a form of Devi, controls snakes in western Bengal. A Brahman serves her shrine except when the outcaste tribes, like Doms or Hāris, sacrifice pigs to her, but the prejudices of the priest are recognized by compelling such people to make their sacrifice behind, not in front of, her shrine. Ananta Deo, 'the deity without end', rules the snakes in Orissa. His worship should extend over a period of fourteen years, and if a man dies before it is completed his son is obliged to continue it on his behalf. He is represented by a figure of a snake made of silver or copper with fourteen knots along its body.[3]

The snake thus adored is invariably the Nāg or cobra, and in the northern hills it alone is sacred and other snakes are killed without mercy. But at one shrine in the Ropang pass in Kāngra District, Panjab, some small harmless snakes, known as Nāg Kīri, 'worms of the Nāg', are adored, probably because the cobra is rarely found at this altitude.[4] The chief Himalayan snake godling is Kailang Nāg, who as father of all the Nāgs rules the weather. He is worshipped only on Sunday, and, like Siva,

[1] Risley, *T. C.* i. 41, ii. 45, 49; Ward, ii. 140 f.: for a full account of the cult of Manasā see Dinesh Chandra Sen, 252 ff.

[2] Gait, *C. R.* i. 195; Watt, *Econ. Dict.* iii. 297 f.

[3] Gait, *op. cit.*, i. 195 f.

[4] C. F. Oldham, 86.

of whom he will doubtless by and by become a manifestation, he is worshipped in the form of a sickle, and his votary, after drinking the blood of the sacrificed animal, falls into a state of afflatus, and before he drops from exhaustion gasps out that the offering has been accepted.[1]

In Gujarāt the cobra is never killed, and when one dies it is laid in a jar in a lonely spot. If one is accidentally killed its body is rubbed with ghi, and it is cremated with the same rites as in the case of a man. It is said to be blinded by the sight or touch of a woman in her courses, and in revenge it causes barrenness in the woman or destroys her children. In order to make amends for a chance injury followed by these results childless women worship the image of a snake on the bright fifth of every month with offerings of milk, water, and jasmine flowers, the worshipper observing a fast. This rite should be continued for one or three years, and at the final service a silver cobra is laid on a drawing of a cobra made on the ground. The woman and her husband wearing one long white sheet, a symbol of their remarriage, bathe, and the woman lays sandalwood paste and flowers on the silver image, offers Mūng pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*) and water, gives black clothes to thirteen married women, and feasts nine married couples. Then she takes an iron image of the cobra to a place where four roads meet and buries it there, apparently as a mode of dispersing its evil influence. To commemorate the performance of the rite she wears on her neck a silver plate on which the image of a cobra is carved, and during their whole lives she and her husband on the day of the festival feed from three to nine married women who wear similar amulets.[2]

The Khāsi cult of the Tlen is still more remarkable. This is a monstrous snake which must be appeased by human sacrifice, and to provide the victims many murders have been committed in fairly recent times. A story is told of a hero who heated a lump of iron red-hot, and after inducing the snake to open its mouth thrust in the iron and killed it. He cut up the body and sent the pieces in every direction with orders that the people should eat them. Wherever this order was obeyed the place remains free from the Tlen, but one piece was not eaten and from

[1] *Ibid.* 99 ff.; Rose, *Gloss.* i. 215.

[2] *B. G.* ix, part i, 379.

this a multitude of Tlens were produced which still infest the district. The Tlen attaches itself to property, and brings wealth to its owners on condition that it is supplied with blood. This can be procured only by the murder of a human being, and the murderer cuts off the hair and finger-nails of his victim with a pair of silver scissors, and extracts a little blood in a bamboo tube from his nostrils, all which are offered to the Tlen. It is said that the victim is stupefied by throwing charmed rice over him and thus falls an easy prey to 'the beater', as the murderer is called. If this method fails, some of the victim's hair or the hem of his garment is cut off, and he gradually loses strength, wastes away, and dies. Many families are known, or suspected to be, keepers of a Tlen, and such people are naturally dreaded and avoided.[1]

This bloodthirsty snake appears in the folk-tales as the dragon that demands a victim daily. A monster of this kind in Kāfiristān was slain by Imra, and the tracks marking his descent to slay unhappy travellers are still indicated by the light quartz veins which show distinctly against the darker ground of his neck, and a large tarn was formed by the blood which flowed from his head.[2]

In connexion with the story of the Tlen it may be remarked that in Assam the ancestor of one of the Meithei clans, Pākhangba, appears occasionally in the form of a snake, or rather as the external soul of the Raja. In contrast with the Tlen he is an ancestral spirit worshipped by women, while among the matriarchal Khāsis whose women are priests the Tlen is not regarded as an ancestor. Both are associated with the fortunes of a family, but while the Tlen may move from one family to another, Pākhangba is connected only with Raja directly, but indirectly with the whole State; both vary in form, but they agree in appearing largest and most monstrous as portents of evil and misfortune; there is no evidence of human sacrifice to Pākhangba. 'In regard to the means adopted to get rid of the Tlen we may compare the transfer of sin by passing on the royal clothing with the sacrifice of property, money and ornaments which Khāsis make when endeavouring to free themselves of the snake.'[3]

[1] Gurdon, 98 ff.; Allen, i. 49. [2] Robertson, 388. [3] Hodson, 100 f.

The race of the Nāgas appears throughout legend and folk-belief. Little is known of them from history, and they have been supposed to be either a non-Aryan tribe which opposed the Indo-Aryans, or a trans-Himalayan race which adopted the snake as its totem.[1] In art they usually appear as snakes with the upper part of their bodies human, their heads crowned with serpents' heads, while the lower part of their bodies from the hips downwards is purely animal, a motif which some believe to have been derived from west-Asian prototypes.[2] On the Sānchi Stupa we have a relief of a Nāga spirit as a hooded cobra housed in a shrine with a domical roof, and a Bacchanalian appears in a statue from Mathura, which seems to have been a centre of the Nāga cult of water spirits.[3] In the folk-tales, as in the Jātaka and the collection of Somadeva, they appear half human, half divine, reverencing Buddha, possessing kingdoms and palaces under the water, where they are sometimes visited by mortals who form alliances with them; their breath is poisonous, they eat flesh, haunt trees; a Nāga lady falls in love with a prince; they are worshipped with offerings of milk, rice, fish, meat, and wine.[4] In the Panjab hills there is a widespread cult of Nāgas, whom Dr. Vogel supposes to typify the alternately beneficial and destructive power of water, and Mr. Rose rejects Dr. Oldham's theory that the so-called snake gods and Devis represent the deified rulers of the country, and he thinks it safer to regard both groups of deities as emblems of the powers of fertility and reproduction.[5] Some Nāgas, again, are friendly, as in the case of the Mirzapur Kharwār who came upon a Nāgin laying her eggs. She fell at his feet and implored him to throw the eggs into a water-hole. My means of a bamboo sieve he did this, and went with her to the brink, when she plunged in and told him not to be afraid to follow her. He, too, plunged into the water, which dried up, and he came to the Nāga's palace, who entertained him royally and offered to give him anything he desired. But he asked only for a pan, pot, and spoon, which the Nāga gave him, and he returned home to find his relations performing the death-rites in his honour,

[1] Oldham, 31, 45, 55.
[2] Grünwedel, 43 ff.
[3] Smith, *H. F. A.* 80, 138 f.
[4] *Jātaka*, Index, s.v. Nāga; Somadeva, *ibid.*
[5] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 147 ff.

supposing him to have been slain by a tiger—one of the many tales of the people of the sea, of which Julmār, 'the sea-born', in the *Arabian Nights* is an example.[1]

In the Panjab and parts of the United Provinces the Singhs' 'lions' or snake godlings

'are males, and though they cause fever are not very malevolent, often taking away pain. They have great power over milch cattle, the milk of the eleventh day after calving is sacred to them, and libations of milk are always acceptable. They are generally distinguished by some colour, the most commonly worshipped being Kālī, Hari, and Bhūrī Singh, or black, green, and grey. But the diviner will often declare a fever to be caused by some Singh whom no one has ever heard of before, but to whom a shrine must be built; and so they multiply in the most perplexing manner. Dead men also have a way of becoming snakes, a fact which is revealed in a dream, when again a shrine must be built. If a peasant sees a snake he will salute it, and if it bite him, he or his heirs, as the case may be, will build a shrine on the spot to avoid a repetition of the occurrence. They are the servants of Rāja Bāsuk Nāg [Vāsuki, or Sesha, the snake which upholds the world], King of Pātāla or Tartarus; and their worship is most certainly connected in the minds of the people with that of the Pitri or ancestors, though it is difficult to say in which the connexion lies [the house snake is naturally the abode of the dead of the family]. Sunday is their day, and Brahmans do not object to be fed at their shrines, though they will not take the offerings, which are generally of an impure nature.'[2]

Thus the snake from its habit of living in holes in the earth is naturally a chthonic creature. As it frequents houses it is an embodiment of the ancestors or hero of the tribe or clan.[3] In the Panjab hills every householder keeps an image of the Nāga snake, which is said to be harmless, as contrasted with the Sāmp, the ordinary snake, which is venomous. The snake is put in charge of the homestead, and is held responsible that no dangerous snake enters it. The worship of such snakes is conducted at ant-hills, the servicel asting forty days, when offerings of sugar, rice, and millet are made.[4] Sometimes the reverence for the snake may be based on totemism, as in the case of Pākhangba of the Meitheis, or in the Central Provinces

[1] Burton, vi. 54 ff.
[2] Ibbetson, 114.
[3] Cf. *E. R. E.* vi. 653.
[4] *P. N. Q.* iii. 92.

when women of the Nāg or cobra sept of the Sonjharas will not mention the name 'Nāg' aloud, just as they refrain from uttering the names of their male relations.[1]

Chthonic snakes, as might have been expected, guard hidden treasure. Jagatswâmi of Bhinmāl was tormented by a live snake which took up its quarters in his belly. As he fell asleep on his way to a place of pilgrimage the snake came out of his mouth. Then the city snake of Bhinmāl issued from a hole near the town gate and ordered it to depart and plague the Raja no longer. The other snake replied, 'There is a great treasure in your hole. How would you like to leave it? Why then ask me to leave my home?' The gate snake answered, 'If any servant of the Raja is near at hand, let him hearken. If some leaves of the caper tree (*Capparis spinosa*) are plucked, mixed with the flowers of a creeper that grows under it, boiled and given to the Raja, the snake inside him will die.' 'If any servant of the Raja is near at hand,' retorted the other, 'let him hearken. If boiling oil be poured down the hole of the gate snake, the snake will die and great treasure will be found.' A clever Kayasth clerk of the Raja's staff overheard all this. He found the plants, prepared the potion, and dosed the Raja, who was seized with such agonies that he ordered the clerk to be killed. But soon after the Raja vomited up the snake, and when they read the clerk's notes they killed the gate snake and recovered the treasure. Large sums were spent in feeding Brahmans to appease the ghosts of the clerk and the pair of snakes, and with what was left the famous Sun temple was built.[2] James Forbes tells a story how he learned that treasure was concealed in a tower in a place known only to the original owner and the mason who helped to hide it. They found a chamber which his men said contained the treasure guarded by a Jinn in the mortal form of a snake, and were unwilling to descend into it. Forbes induced them to enter and immediately they called out that they were enclosed by a great snake. When lights were procured, to his astonishment and terror he 'beheld a horrid monster rear his head, over an immense length of body, coiled in volumes on the ground, and working itself into exertion by a sort of sluggish motion'. The men were rescued and lighted

[1] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 100 ff.; Russell, *T. C.* iv. 510. [2] *B. G.* i, part i, 461.

hay dropped down 'consumed the mortal part of the guardian genius, as we afterwards took up the scorched and lifeless body of a large snake; but notwithstanding a minute search, no money could be found. The proprietor had doubtless carried off his treasure when he fled to a foreign country.'[1]

Snakes guarding treasure are often heard talking to each other about it, and the present writer remembers trying a case in which two old women whose houses were divided by a common wall made a formal application that it should be excavated because a treasure-guardian snake was heard speaking from inside the wall and begging some one to relieve him of the treasure then in his charge. The wall was dug down, but nothing was discovered, and it was gravely stated that this was one of a class of snakes which can change its form, and must do so every hundred years, when it becomes either a man or a bull, and that the act of demolishing its abode had forced him to disappear with his hoard. A caste of snake-charmers in the United Provinces, called Bangāli or 'men of Bengal', have the power of recognizing such snakes, follow them secretly till they return to their holes, and then compel them to show where their treasure is hidden. This they will do on condition that they receive a drop of blood from the little finger of a first-born son.[2] Indian folk-lore is full of such stories. In a Deccan tale Seventee Bai gets hold of the great diamond which a cobra used to carry about in its mouth, and in a Bengal story the sons of the Raja and his minister gain the jewel in a monstrous cobra's hood by covering it with horse-dung and thus concealing its lustre from its owner.[3] This Mani or hood-jewel possesses such lustre that it lights the hero on his way to the palace where the silver-jewelled tree is to be found; if any one gets hold of it the snake dies; the sleeping beauty cannot return to her home beneath the waters, and loses the hero till it is recovered; it is a potent amulet that secures the attainment of every desire; it saves a man from drowning by causing the waters to part and allow him to cross rivers dry-shod.[4]

Many magical remedies are efficacious for the cure of snake-

[1] *Oriental Memoirs*, ii. 18 ff. [2] *P. N. Q.* ii. 91.
[3] Miss Frere, 33; Lal Behari Day, 18 ff.
[4] Somadeva, i. 564, ii. 315; Temple-Steel, 304, 424; *P. N. Q.* i. 76.

bite. It was an ancient custom when no charmer was at hand to bind a man bitten by a snake on a bundle of reeds, 'and place on him a leaf on which is written a blessing for that person who will accidentally light upon him, and save him by a charm from destruction', a method which reminds us of that used by the Babylonians, who laid a sick man in the public square so that the passers-by might advise him to adopt treatment which they had found useful in their own case.[1] In the Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces, there were two brothers, Rajawa and Soral; the ghost of the former cures snake-bite, that of the latter murrain in cattle. The moment a man is bitten by a snake he must tie a string or a strip of his clothing round his neck and cry, 'Mercy, O god Rajawa!' It will answer nearly as well to invoke Ghori Bādshāh, that is Muhammad Ghori, the great early Musalmān invader, or the saint Rāmji Bāba. At the same time the patient must vow to make an offering on his recovery. In order to ascertain whether the venom has left the sufferer they take him in and out over the threshold, the haunt of spirits, and light a lamp before him which disperses the venom, and if he can then eat salt and the bitter leaves of the Nīm tree (*Azadirachta indica*) he is safe, but if he cannot swallow them the whole village goes out and appeals to Rajawa-deo till he recovers, a measure which is said to be always successful.[2] In Ahmadnagar bands of cloth or cords are tied—a reasonable precaution to prevent the poison spreading—and the sufferer is taken to the temple of Mother Bhavāni, placed before her image, Nīm leaves crushed with chillies are administered, drums are beaten, charms recited, and a broom made of Nīm branches is passed over his body from head to foot to disperse the poison.[3]

Certain tribes, castes, and persons, probably as a result of totemism, claim descent from snakes. Nāgbansis, 'snake-born', Rājputs, who pride themselves on their origin, Bais Rājputs in Oudh, and Cheros in the United Provinces are included in the list.[4] Meitheis say they are descended from the snake Pākhangba.[5] If a man of the snake sept of the Parjas in the

[1] Alberuni, *India*, i. 194; Herodotus, i. 197.
[2] Elliott, *S. R.* 120 f.
[3] *B. G.* xvii. 41.
[4] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 121 f., ii. 217, iv. 39; Dalton, 126.
[5] Hodson, *Meitheis*, 124.

Central Provinces kills a snake accidentally he puts a piece of new yarn on his head, praying for forgiveness, and deposits the body of the snake on an ant-hill, where snakes are supposed to live.[1]

Certain persons are believed to possess special powers over snakes. Mīrāsis or bards in the Panjab perform special worship of snakes in Bhādon (August–September) when snakes are most dreaded. Their women, who belong to the snake tribe, make an image of a snake in dough, paint it black and red, and place it in a winnowing basket, with its head and neck raised in the posture of an angry cobra. They carry it about and beg, receiving at each house a cake and some butter, but in families where there is a young bride the dole is a rupee and a quarter, this being a lucky number, and some cloth. After going round the village singing songs in honour of the snake hero Gugga, they bury the image and raise a kind of grass mound over it. During that month women place on the grave offerings of curds, which after presentation are divided among the children, and on that day no work is done and no butter is churned. When snakes appear in numbers the rite is performed not at the grave, but in the jungle where snakes are known to be found.[2] In the Central Provinces Gauria snake-charmers cure snake-bite by an appeal to the Bel tree (*Aegle marmelos*), and to Dhanwantari, the physician of the gods.[3] In Baroda, when a person is bitten, an expert is called in, who gives charcoal and cow-dung cakes to be rubbed on the wound, and as he repeats his charms he ties knot after knot on a thread. If the patient continues restless he dashes seven handfuls of water on his eyes, and then the snake, speaking through the patient, explains why he bit him. If the wrong supposed by the snake was slight it agrees to depart, but if it was serious it refuses to move and the patient dies. A family of Nāgar Brahmans are adepts in this form of cure.[4]

Snakes should be addressed euphemistically as 'maternal uncle', or 'rope', and if you are bitten by a snake you should never name it, but say, 'a rope touched me'. Sonjhara women in the Central Provinces will not name a snake aloud, just as they will not name their male relations.[5]

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 373. [2] *P. N. Q.* ii. 91. [3] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 25.
[4] G. H. Desai, *C. R.* i. 67 f. [5] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 510.

Snakes exercise control over the weather. In the Veda Ahi-budhnya, the serpent of the deep, is an atmospheric deity, and Ahi and Vritra control the waters and shut up the rain.[1] At Sankisa in the Farrukhabad District, United Provinces, the Buddhist pilgrim Fa-hian records that

'a white-eared dragon is the patron of this body of priests. He causes fertilizing and seasonable showers of rain to fall within their country, and preserves it from plagues and calamities, and so causes the priesthood to dwell in security. The priests, in gratitude for these favours, have erected a dragon-chapel, and within it placed a resting-place for his accommodation. Moreover they make special contributions in the shape of religious offerings to provide the dragon with food. The body of priests every day select from their midst three men to go and take their meal in this chapel. At the end of each season of rain the dragon suddenly assumes the form of a little serpent, both of whose ears are edged with white. The body of priests, recognizing him, place in the midst of his lair a copper vessel full of cream; and then, from the highest to the lowest, they walk past him in procession as if to pay him greeting all round. He then suddenly disappears. He makes his appearance once every year.'[2]

The site of this Nāga tank has been identified, and milk is still offered to him in the month of May, at the Nāgpanchami festival, and at any other time when rain is wanted.[3] Udyāna, the modern Swāt, was famous for its water dragons. The Nāga Apalāla 'was able, by the subtle influence of the charms he used, to restrain and withstand the power of the wicked dragons, so that they could not afflict the country with violent storms of rain. Thanks to him the people were then able to gather in an abundance of grain. Each family then agreed to offer him, in token of their gratitude, a piece of grain as a yearly tribute.' But after a time some persons omitted to bring their offerings, and the Nāga in his wrath prayed that he might become a poisonous dragon and afflict them with rain and wind. So at the end of his life he became the dragon of that country, and to this day Rajas in the Hindu Kush are supposed to be able to control the elements, probably by their influence over the local dragon.[4] Many tales of the same kind come from Nepāl where

[1] Macdonell, *V. M.* 72 f., 152 f., 158 f.
[2] Beal, i, Introd. xli f.
[3] *A. S. R.* i. 274; Führer, 84: cf. Frazer, *Pausanias*, v. 203 f.
[4] Beal, i. 122 f.; Biddulph, 95; Oldham, 50 ff.

the belief, as in other parts of the northern hills, is based on the constant occurrence of drought or of violent storms. King Gunkāmdeva brought the Nāgas under his control, and each of them gave him a likeness of himself, drawn with his own blood, and promised that whenever a drought occurred the worship of their pictures would cause plentiful rain; similar pictures are worshipped to this day in time of drought, and small ones are pasted on the walls of houses; another king set up an image of Swayambhu, and as the water of a great flood desolated the valley, when it rose to the navel of the image, the king caught the Nāga, shut him up in a cave, and he now provides water as it is required; in another story the saint Gorakhnāth enticed the nine Nāgas into a hillock and sat on it, with the result that there was a twelve years' drought.[1]

There are many folk-beliefs connected with snakes. The rainbow is the form of a great snake blown up from the underworld. If the shadow of a pregnant woman falls on a snake it becomes blind.[2] The Dhāman (*Ptyas mucosis*), a harmless variety, is said to give a fatal bite on Sundays, and it is the male of the cobra; if a buffalo is in the same field with it, the one first seen by the other will die; it kills cattle by crawling under them, or by putting its tail up their nostrils, and it has a sting in its tail which causes anything it touches to mortify; the Dhaniya snake kills by casting its shadow on its victim.[3] When a goat kills a snake it ruminates and then spits out a Manka or bead which when applied to a snake-bite absorbs the venom and swells, and if it is then dipped in milk and squeezed the poison drops out and the patient is cured, but if it is not treated in this way the Manka will break in pieces; others say that in the pouch-like appendages of the older Adjutant birds (*Leptoptilos argala*) the fang of a snake is found, and this, when rubbed, prevents the venom from spreading, and it turns black.[4]

Snakes have the power of identifying and protecting the heirs of kingdoms. Ahichhatra, 'snake umbrella', a famous old town in the Bareilly District, United Provinces, has naturally

[1] D. Wright, 86, 95 f., 141.
[2] *P. N. Q.* i. 15.
[3] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 75 f., x. 50.
[4] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 102: on snake stones, Yule–Burnell, s.v. *Folk-lore*, xxvii. 262 ff.

a legend of this kind which tells of a man who found Adirāja, the Ahīr cowherd, who was destined to rule, sleeping under the shade of the outspread hood of a cobra; the Nāga king, Machalindra, spread his hood over Buddha to protect him from rain and flies; Nānak, the Sikh Guru, was protected in the same way; and the same story is told of a Musalmān in Kanara, who was accordingly named Sarpān Malik, 'lord of snakes'.[1]

The household snake, as we have seen, represents the sainted ancestors of the family, and it is highly respected. In the Central Provinces the Bharias, a forest tribe, offer a black chicken to their household godling, the cobra, because he was born in the family of one of their members. As he could not work in the fields he was employed for doing errands, and one day he surprised one of his younger brothers' wives, who are taboo to their elder brother-in-law, without her veil. She reproached him and he returned in dudgeon into his oven where he was accidentally burnt to death, and so he was deified.[2] Hence when such a snake dies it should be cremated like a Brahman. Kunbis in the Deccan are careful to worship their patron snake. Their women go to a white ant-hill where the cobra is supposed to live. A priest says prayers and the women with their hands joined dance round it, rising, kneeling, and keeping time to a song. At intervals they take parched grain in their clenched fists, put it on each other's heads, and ask the names of their husbands. As no woman may mention her husband's name directly, she brings it out in a rhyme.[3]

The taboo against killing snakes is occasionally violated. In the Central Provinces, if a Kunbi dies from snake-bite, they make a silver image of a snake, kill a real snake, erect a platform outside the village, put the image on it, and worship it as Nāgobadeo, 'divine father'; Gonds in the early part of the rainy season kill a cobra, offer its head and tail to Nāgdeo, and cook and eat the remainder at home, supposing that this rite protects them from the venom during the year.[4] In the same Provinces Gadbas make a compromise; if a snake enters the hut of one of the Gūmal sub-caste he will call a neighbour of another sub-caste

[1] Führer, 28; Hardy, 146; Macauliffe, i. 19; *B. G.* xv, part ii, 331: cf. Hartland, *Ritual and Belief*, 302 ff.; Tod, i. 342, ii. 1217, iii. 1330.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 247 f.
[3] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 305.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 101, iv. 39.

to kill it, and though he may not touch its body with his bare hands, if he holds it covered with a rag no sin is incurred.[1]

The chief snake festival is the Nāgpanchami, 'dragon's fifth', so called because it is held, as usual, on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of Sāvan (July–August) when snakes are most dreaded. In Nepāl the festival is said to commemorate the fight between Garuda and a famous Nāga.[2] Garuda, perhaps meaning 'the swallower', also known as Suparna, 'well-winged', is usually represented half man, half bird. He is one of the large class of birds of fable, like the Rukh of Arab tales, or the Sīmurgh, and he is possibly derived from the latter.[3] He has also Iranian affinities, his image resembling that of Ahura Mazda.[4] The image of Garuda, again, appears on the coins of the Gupta dynasty, where it is supposed to have been borrowed from the eagle on Roman aurei, which were probably imitated as Gupta dīnārs. His mother, Vinatā, quarrelled with her sister Kadru, mother of the snakes, about the colour of the horse that was produced at the churning of the ocean, and since that time there has been constant enmity between their descendants, so that the peasant still repeats the name of Garuda thrice before going to rest, as a safeguard against snakes. In the present day in the Deccan women draw with sandalwood and vermilion figures of nine snakes. Of the nine two are full grown, seven are young, and one of the latter is crop-tailed. Beside them is drawn a woman holding a lighted lamp, a stone slab, and a well with a snake's hole close to it. Married women throw food, fruit, milk, and vermilion on these drawings, and recite the tale of the Nine Snakes, in which the despised Cinderella orphan girl, who is bullied by her relatives, gives food to the snakes, who then appears as a fine young man and carries her away to his underground palace. She held a lamp while the snake's wife gave birth to seven snakelets, but in her fright she dropped the lamp, and it cut off the tip of the little snake's tail. When he grew up he swore to have his revenge, and came to her father's house on Nāgpanchami day, intending to kill her. But when he found her worshipping snakes and laying out food for them

[1] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 10.
[2] D. Wright, 37.
[3] Grünwedel, 48 ff.; Burton, *Nights*, i. 142; *J. R. A. S.* xviii. 339, xxi. 24; for the Rukh, Yule, *Marco Polo*, ii. 349 ff.
[4] *J. R. A. S.* 1915, p. 427; see *E. R. E.* vi. 689.

he spared her life and told the parents of her devotion. Then the old snake gave her great treasures and made her the happy mother of children, a good moral which teaches little Maratha girls to observe the festival.[1]

At the Nāgpanchami in Garhwāl in the lower Himalaya a piece of ground is purified by smearing it with cow-dung, and a figure is drawn with sandalwood and turmeric of five, seven, or nine snakes, to which offerings of flowers, sandalwood, turmeric, and parched grain are made. Lamps are lighted and waved before the snakes, and food and fruit are presented to them. The night is spent in listening to tales about the Nāga. Occasionally a wandering Jogi beggar brings a live snake to which offerings are made, and milk is laid near holes in which snakes are believed to live.[2] In other parts of this District the festival is known as the Rikhi or Biruri-panchami, and Siva is known as Rikhesvar, 'lord of the Rishi or Sages', in which form he is represented surrounded by serpents and crowned with a chaplet of hooded cobras, thus indicating the combination of snake worship with his cultus. Figures of serpents and birds, the latter possibly in connexion with Garuda, are painted on the house walls, and seven days before the feast a mixture of wheat, grain, and pulse is steeped in water. On the morning of the Nāgpanchami they take a wisp of grass, tie it up in the form of a snake, and dip it into the water in which the Birura or soaked grain, which gives its name to the festival, has been steeped. All these things, with money and sweetmeats, are presented to the snake godling.[3] At the festival in Nepāl, as a result of the struggles of Garuda with the Nāga, a stone image of the former is said to perspire, and the priests wipe off the perspiration with a handkerchief, a thread from which is a sovereign remedy in cases of snake-bite.[4] In the Panjab hills the ritual includes the painting of two snakes on the house walls and the feeding of Brahmans.[5]

In Bihār and parts of the United Provinces at the Nāgpanchami girls let dolls or puppets float in a stream or tank, and the boys beat these images with long switches specially cut for the

[1] *B. G.* xviii, part i, 444 f.; B. A. Gupte, 176 f.
[2] Atkinson, ii. 836.
[3] *Ibid.* ii. 851.
[4] D. Wright, 37.
[5] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 415.

purpose; or women worship Seshanāg, the serpent that upholds the world, with offerings of milk and grain and mark their houses with lines of cow-dung to repel snakes.[1] Naturally an attempt has been made to invent an aetiological legend to explain the custom of beating the puppets and floating them in water. Raja Janamejaya, in order to avenge the death of his father killed by a snake, ordered a general massacre of the Nāgas. Takshaka, king of the serpents, escaped, but his foolish wife betrayed him, and he was sentenced to death. Takshaka retaliated by ordering the Raja to have every married woman in his dominions slain to revenge his wife's treachery. The Brahmans settled the matter by ordering that every Brahman woman at the Nāgpanchami should make a doll and have it flung into water and beaten in lieu of herself. This suggests an ancient custom of human sacrifice in connexion with snake cults. There is a good parallel to the substitution of the puppets in the case of those annually cast into the Tiber, which 'may have been designed to purge the city from demoniac influence by attracting the attention of the demon from human beings to the puppets, and then toppling the whole uncanny crew neck and crop into the river, which would soon sweep them far out to sea'.[2] The rite may be, in part, cathartic, but many legends of heroines flinging themselves over a rock into the sea and receiving divine honour have been interpreted to be 'a ritualistic mode of disposing of the body or the puppet that contained the vegetation daimon, by the periodic casting of it into the sea, either for the purpose of ejecting it as hopelessly decayed, or of refreshing and recovering it'.[3]

An attempt has been made to account for snake cults in India on the theory that they were imported by some foreign race of invaders from Central Asia, like the Kushāns or other Scythian tribes. The worship of snakes does not seem to have formed an important part of Scythian religion, and in any case the number of venomous snakes in India, the great loss of life occasioned by them, and the aptitude in the lower culture of deifying any creature felt to be dangerous as a mode of expiation seem to be

[1] Buchanan, ii. 481; Grierson, 400; Crooke, *T. C.* i. 172.
[2] Frazer, *G. B.* 'Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild', ii. 107 f.; Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, 116 ff.
[3] Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 34, 39, 42.

sufficient to account for its independent growth.[1] The cult appears in the Vedas,[2] but it is doubtful if it was generally prevalent, and in its more specialized form it may have been borrowed from the non-Aryan people. Then it was rapidly taken over by the Brahmans and they developed it in their characteristic way in connexion with Siva and the Linga, and the Saiva Lingāyats of the Deccan have naturally adopted it, just as Vishnu rests on Ananta or Sesha, the world serpent.

[1] Tod, i. 43.

[2] Hopkins, 154.

XVI

TREE AND PLANT WORSHIP

THE worship of trees and plants, as objects of awe and wonder, based on the mystery of their growth, the movement of their leaves and branches which produce uncanny sounds at night, their periodical rest and awakening in spring, the sudden growth of the plant from its seed, belongs to the pre-animistic stage. But it rapidly passes to that of animism, when the tree or plant is supposed to be occupied by an indwelling spirit which accounts for their use as sources of intoxicants or narcotics. But the two stages constantly overlap, and devotion to a tree is often that of the spirit which is supposed to abide in it.

Of the many phases of this belief one of the most primitive is the consecration of sacred groves, the last remnants of the primeval forest left intact as the refuge of the tree spirits which occupied the jungle before the clearing was made. This mode of agriculture, known as Jhūm, when the jungle plots are periodically cut down and burnt, is one of the most primitive, and in spite of the prohibitions enforced by the Forest Department, still survives among some of the more isolated tribes.[1] The groves thus preserved are known to the Mundas as Saran, Sarna, 'a refuge', a word borrowed from the Hindus, probably replacing the original dialectical name. They have been described as the only form of temple known to them, and they are preserved inviolate by an effective sanction.[2] They give shelter to a group of godlings who are held responsible for the fertility of the crops and people, an appeal is made to them in times of sickness, and if the trees be cut or injured the spirits show their displeasure by withholding the needed rain and in other ways. Orāons call these sacred groves Jāhir, and the service to the godlings who abide in them is restricted to the descendants of the original clearers of the jungle. Chola

[1] *I. G. I.* iii. 24 f., and other references for 'Shifting cultivation' in Index; Baden-Powell, 52 ff.; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 90; Thurston, *T. C.* iv. 46.
[2] Dalton, 188; Sarat Chandra Roy, 386.

Pacho, the Lady of the Grove, gives rain and good crops.[1] Kandhs are said to have reached the stage where they preserve their groves as timber reserves, but none of the timber can be cut without propitiation of the godlings and without the consent of the village authorities.[2] There is a forest in Berār which is said to be dedicated to a neighbouring temple, no one daring to buy or cut it, and in other parts of the Province the sacred groves are so carefully guarded that during the festivals held annually in them it is the custom solemnly to collect and burn the dead and fallen timber.[3] The same rules apply to the sacred groves of Mathura in which Krishna used to sport with the Gopi milkmaids. In Kulu, when a traveller's servant attempted to use some dry cypress trees as fuel, he was told that the trees 'were sacred to the deities of the elements, who would be sure to revenge any injury done to them by visiting the neighbourhood with heavy and untimely snow'.[4] In the Ludiāna District of the Panjab the sacred grove marks the place where some holy man has become a Siddh, in other words, has been absorbed into the Deity, and no villager dares to touch the wood which is left for the use of ascetics and other reverend personages.[5] The last stage comes in the plains where it is merely a sentiment that the village grove or the village sacred tree should not be violated. The cutting of any tree is a dangerous business because it may offend the spirit abiding in it. Maghs of Bengal believed that it was dangerous to fell trees except in the presence of Europeans on whom the blame of the sacrilege would fall, but in their company they would advance fearlessly. When a large tree was felled one of the party was always provided with a green twig which he placed in the centre of the stump as the tree collapsed. This was intended to give the tree a chance of sprouting again, and thus to propitiate the spirit whose occupancy had been thus rudely disturbed. At the same time the feller pleaded that he was acting under the orders of his European masters. In clearing one spot an orderly was obliged to take the axe and cut the first tree before a Magh would make a stroke, and he was considered to bear all the anger of the disturbed spirit until the arrival of a European relieved him from

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, 107 f.; Dehon, 139. [2] *N. I. N. Q.* ii. 112.
[3] Lyall, *Gaz.* 29, 31. [4] Moorcroft, i. 211. [5] *N. I. N. Q.* v. 106.

the burden.[1] In the Central Provinces trees are believed to be animate and occupied by spirits; before a man cuts a tree he begs its pardon for the injury he is about to inflict on it, and Gonds must not shake a tree at night or pluck any of its leaves of fruit because the tree spirit is asleep and must not be disturbed.[2] Miris in Assam are unwilling to clear the jungle as it disturbs the spirits.[3] According to the ancient ritual, as in the case of the Maghs, the feller should place a stalk of grass on the place where the axe was about to fall, and say, 'O plant, shield it!' and when the tree fell he poured ghi on the stump, saying, 'Grow thou out of this, O Lord of the Forest, grow into a hundred shoots! May we grow with a thousand shoots!'[4] Mikirs appear to be one of the only tribes in the lower stage of culture who do not worship trees.[5] Possibly the statement is incorrect, at any rate, elsewhere the belief is universal, and is generally based on the theory that the tree is a source of fertility, as in one of the folk-tales a woman ascribes the possession of five sons to her prayer to the godling occupying a banyan tree near the city gates.[6]

Hence special sanctity attaches to the birch tree. By one tradition Buddha was born in the shade of some lofty satin trees (*Murraya exotica, Chloroxylon swietania*); by another story his mother, Māyā, stretched out her hand to take hold of a branch of a holy Sāl tree (*Shorea robusta*) and was delivered.[7] Sāl trees are said to have assisted at his birth, rendering homage to him at his death, letting fall on him their flowers out of season and bending their branches to shade him.[8] Another legend states that he was born under an Asoka tree (*Jonesia asoka*).[9] It is not an improbable suggestion that part of the sanctity of the Saran or holy grove is in connexion with birth, because women visit it after their delivery.[10] It is perhaps in this connexion that Khāsis hang the pot containing the placenta on a tree outside the village, probably in the hope that the child may grow as

[1] *Calcutta Review*, xxvi. 512.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* i. 98, *Betul Gaz.* i. 61: cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', ii. 18 ff., 36 ff.; Anantha Krishna Iyer, i. 281.
[3] Dalton, 33.
[4] *Satapatha Brāhmana, S. B. E.* xxvi. 165 f.
[5] Stack, 33.
[6] *Jātaka*, iv. 264.
[7] Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, 26; Kern, 14.
[8] Rhys Davids, *op. cit.* 189; Beal, ii. 32, 35; *J. R. A. S.* 1890, p. 381 note.
[9] Beal, ii. 24.
[10] *J. R. A. S.* xx. 358.

the tree grows, and after a circumcision Brāhuis bury the fore-skin under a green tree 'that the lad may be fruitful in generation'.[1] In one of the folk-tales a man says to a girl, 'My dear! this tree is called Uddāla (*Cassia fistula*), and you may name your child Uddālaka because he was conceived here.'[2]

The tree growing near a grave in conceived to be, if not a case of transformation of the spirit, at least an abode for it.[3] It is particularly stated that Buddha died under two, or four, Sāl trees, and they are represented in the sculpture of the Nirvāni in the Ajanta caves.[4] Hos bury the ashes of the dead beneath tamarind trees.[5] Special respect is paid to the trees growing near the graves of Musalmān saints; no one dares to cut wood from the trees which surround the grave of a Pīr or holy man in Kāthiāwār except to cook the sweetmeats which are offered to him.[6] In Sātāra the saint Gorakhnāth has now become the patron godling and is tending to rank as a manifestation of Siva; he is represented by a large stone beside a gigantic tamarind named after him. Its bark is scored everywhere with natural fissures which are supposed to be the writing in an unknown tongue by the godling, and every Kānphati or 'split-ear' Jogi who comes to worship gets his name written on the tree whether he tells it or not.[7] The theory that the ghosts of the murdered abide in trees may perhaps account for the strange story of Bājirāo, the Marātha Peshwa. He was haunted by the ghost of Nārāyanrāo, who had been murdered by the parents of the Peshwa, so he planted thousands of mango trees near Poona, probably as a refuge for the troubled spirits of their victims.[8]

In the same category as saints' trees are those reputed to have sprung from the tooth-twig, and still retain this sanctity. Buddha is said to have bitten a piece from a willow stick and planted it, when it immediately grew seven feet high, and though Brahmans and unbelievers tried to cut it down it always sprang up again; and the Dantadhāvana tree at Sakita was so famous

[1] Gurdon, 124; Bray, 30; Ja'far Sharīf, 49. [2] *Jātaka*, iv. 188.
[3] Hartland, *Primitive Paternity*, i. 158 ff.; Frazer, *F. L. O. T.* ii. 39 ff.
[4] Beal, ii. 32, 35; Kern, 43; *J. R. A. S.* 1912, p. 126, 1913, p. 5; Fergusson-Burgess, 344.
[5] Dalton, 189. [6] *B. G.* viii. 453. [7] *B. G.* xix. 587 f.
[8] Grant Duff, ii. 430; *B. G.* xviii, part ii, 293.

that, like the Bodhi tree at Gaya, under which he obtained illumination, twigs from it were distributed to religious establishments.[1] The famous Banyan tree on the Narbada near Broach is said to have sprung from the tooth-twig of the saint Kabir, and that used by the saint 'Abdu-l-gādir Jilāni became a Nīm tree at Ludiana.[2] A tree at Gilgit grew from the Chinār or plane-tree shaft of the Faqīr Shāh Burya.[2]

A group of three sacred trees, known as Tentar, 'triad'—a Banyan (*Ficus indica*), Pīpal (*Ficus religiosa*), and a Pākar (*Ficus venosa*) planted together is specially sacred, and is known as Harsankari, 'the chairs of Hara or Hari', Siva or Vishnu, according to the fancy of the planter.[3]

From their fertilizing powers trees are closely associated with marriage. Many tribes and castes make bride and bridegroom walk round a post fixed in the centre of the marriage shed, and each group often selects their special holy tree for this purpose. Binjhwārs in the Central Provinces plant a trunk of the Mahua tree (*Bassia latifolia*), with two branches, in the marriage shed. On this a dagger is laid in a winnowing-fan filled with rice, the former representing the bridegroom and the latter the bride. The bride first goes round it seven times alone, followed by the bridegroom, and then they march round together.[4] Kurmis make the shed, known as the Kohbar, of eleven poles festooned with leaves, and inside it are placed two posts of the Jaleh tree (*Boswellia serrata*), or of Umar (*Ficus glomerata*), one longer than the other, to represent bride and bridegroom,[5] which represents the hut in which, among the lower castes, consummation immediately follows the marriage rite. Prabhu clerks in Bombay decorate the pole with grass, coco-nuts, and a yellow cloth containing grains of millet—all symbols of fertility.[6] The most significant example of a marriage pole is that used by the Bharvāds of Gujarāt. This is called Mānik-stambha, 'a ruby pillar', because it gleams with blood. The tree is decorated and the astrologer orders the chief man to cut his little finger and mark the stem with blood. If the astrologer finds that the time is unsuited for the use of human blood, the

[1] Beal, i, Introd. xliii, i. 240, ii. 173; *A. S. R.* i. 328; Yule–Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, 277.
[2] Ghulam Muhammad, 111. [3] Crooke, *Gloss.* s.vv. Harsankari, Tentar.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 332. [5] *Ibid.* iv. 23. [6] *B. G.* xviii, part 1, 187.

ear of a black sheep is cut and the stem is smeared with its blood, the object being stated to be to appease the Māmo, or 'maternal uncle', a name euphemistically applied to the malignant spirit which abides in this tree, the Khijra (*Prosopis spicigera*). When the tree is felled the man who cuts it becomes possessed by the spirit, makes one or two cuts with his axe at a branch, and runs away without looking back, after which others complete the work. The top of the pole is carved to represent Bhawāni, the Mother goddess, and the images of other gods are carved on the stem. After the marriage rite is over the pole is thrown into a stream, and the place where the next tribal gathering is to be held is decided by the point at which it is stranded, where it is allowed to decay.[1] Mundas erect in the marriage shed two poles, one of bamboo, the other of Sāl wood, and anoint them with turmeric and oil.[2]

Trees are connected with marriage rites in other ways. In Bengal Doms mark a girl as a married woman by applying vermilion to her hair-parting under a tree.[3] In the same province the Gandhabanik bridegroom climbs a Champa tree (*Michelia champaka*) and sits there while the bride seated on a stool is carried seven times round the tree, the primitive form of the marriage pole. Should a Champa tree not be available a log of the wood placed under a canopy made from its branches, and ornamented with gilt flowers like those of the tree, serves the purpose; at a Kāmi wedding the parents of the bride lay on her joined hands some Kusa grass (*Poa cynosuroides*), leaves of the Bel tree (*Aegle marmelos*), and those of the Tulasi or holy basil, with a piece of copper.[4] On the other hand, the tearing of the leaf of the holy tree is a symbol of divorce. The Kachāri husband and wife join in tearing the leaf, and among the Mundas the one of the pair who is unwilling that the marriage bond should continue tears a leaf of the Sāl tree or a piece of tumeric presented to him or her by the chairman of the tribal council.[5]

It is possibly a survival of totemism when we find certain trees or plants connected with certain castes or tribes. The

[1] *Ibid.* ix, part i, 270 ff.
[2] Sarat Chandra Roy, 444.
[3] Risley, *T. C.* i. 244.
[4] *Ibid.* i. 265 f., 393.
[5] Endle, 96; Sarat Chandra Roy, 455 f.

Ālu section of the Koras in Bengal believe that their first ancestor was born under a Phalāla tree, and they will not eat its bulb-like fruit or other bulbs resembling it, such as the Ālu or potato.[1] Each sept of the Khangārs in the Central Provinces venerates a special tree: Pāvras in Bombay worship two sacred trees, known as Bāva Kumba and Rāni Kajhal, the former a male, the latter a female; Buradeo, the chief Gond godling, seems to have been originally the Sāj tree (*Boswellia serrata*), and the chief godling of the Kachāris is Siju, represented by a tree of that name (*Euphorbia cactus*).[2] The Chilbil tree (*Koloptelea integrifolia*), one of those which grew from the tooth-twig of a saint, is connected with the fate of the last of the Rajas of Gonda in Oudh, for it was prophesied that his dynasty would come to an end as soon as a monkey sat on its branches, and this happened when the Great Mutiny, which ended in the ruin of his house, broke out.[3]

Passing on to special varieties of trees, we have the Karam tree (*Adina cordifolia*), the subject of an interesting rite. On the 11th day of Bhādon (August–September) in the middle of the rainy season, boys and girls go to the jungle, cut a branch, and set it up in the village. The people drink and dance round it all night, wine is poured on it, rice and sweetmeats are offered to it, and a chicken is killed and its blood smeared on the leaves. Next morning the branch is taken to the nearest stream, with singing, beating of drums, and dancing by the young folk, and it is flung into the water with the recital of a ritual song praying for rain, the festival marking the revival of vegetation and the resulting fertility.[4] In like manner Mālis in Bengal fix two branches of the Sāl tree in their dancing-place, dance round them, and then throw them into a river.[5] Pāvras in Bombay perform a similar rite in honour of Indra, god of rain. When the harvest is good they set up a branch of the Karam tree, rub the stem with vermilion, sacrifice a goat and a hen, and next morning

[1] Risley, *T. C.* i. 507.

[2] Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 232; *B. G.* xii. 97; Russell, *T. C.* iii. 97; Playfair, 18; Endle, 30; Risley, *T. C.* ii. 89.

[3] *Oudh Gaz.* i. 566; Führer, 304.

[4] O'Malley, *Sambalpur Gaz.* i. 87; Sarat Chandra Roy, *Mundas*, 478 f.; *Calcutta Review*, lxix. 364 f.; Gait, *C. R. Bengal*, i. 191; Crooke, *T. C.* iii. 252; Dalton, 259 f.; Dehon, 173 f.

[5] Dalton, 274.

fling the branch into a river or tank.[1] In rites of this kind the susceptibility of women to spirit possession and their influence in fertility magic are well marked.[2]

The veneration of the varieties of the fig—Bar, Pīpal, Umbar, Gūlar—is universal. The Bar or Vad, the Banyan tree, with its aerial roots, represents the matted hair of Siva. Wives worship it at the full moon with the object of lengthening the lives of their husbands and children, as in the tale of Satyavān, who was warned that he had only a year to live; the faithful Sāvitri married him, and one day as he was felling a tree a branch fell and killed him, but she by her devotions won him back from Yama, god of death. In Bombay married women observe the Vata Pūrnima or full moon vow in Jeth (May–June), worshipping the Banyan to preserve themselves from widowhood.[3] The Akshaya Vata, 'the undying' Banyan tree at the sacred river junction at Allahabad, is the subject of many legends, and still attracts millions of pilgrims. The Buddhist pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, relates that a man-eating demon used to devour the pilgrims who were in the habit of committing suicide by jumping from it into the Ganges, and that heaps of bones lay round it.[4]

The reverence for the Pīpal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) seems to be partly due to the milky juice which exudes from it.[5] It is the Bodhi or Bohū, 'the tree of wisdom under which Buddha gained illumination'.[6] Its roots are Brahmā, its bark Vishnu, its branches Siva Mahādeva. It is worshipped by women as Vāsudeva-Krishna, when the new moon falls on a Monday, by pouring water on its trunk, walking round it a hundred and eight times in the course of the sun, and laying at its roots a copper coin, a Brahmanical cord, and sweetmeats, all of which are appropriated by beggars. An old woman, to promote married happiness, recites the tale of Satyavati, whose mother was a fish, and became by Parāsara, the Rishi, mother of Vyāsa, who compiled the Vedas or the Mahābhārata epic. The tree is worshipped when a boy is invested with the sacred thread, at

[1] *B. G.* xii. 100.
[2] Barton, *C. R.* i. 90.
[3] Balaji Sitaram Kothari, 15 ff.
[4] Beal, i. 232; *A. S. R.* i. 297 f.; Führer, 127 f.
[5] Cf. *Man*, xiii. 4 ff.
[6] Beal, ii. 128, 150 f.; Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, 39: *E. R. E.* vi. 184, xii. 747 f.

marriage, and when the foundation of a house is laid. Women veil their faces as they pass it, for it is the abode of Munja, an initiated Brahman youth, who died unmarried. In old days it is said that women walked round it naked in order to gain fertility, but now they wind a cotton thread a hundred and eight times round the trunk. It should be touched only on Sundays when Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, abides in it. After a death a perforated water-jar is hung on the branches to refresh the thirsty Preta. It is said to be dangerous to lie or cheat under its shade, and merchants are chaffed by saying that they ought not to plant one in a bazar, but, all the same, there are plenty of them in such places.[1] On the night of the Dīvāli or Feast of Lamps the gods assemble and pluck the blossoms of the Gūlar (*Ficus glomerata*), and this is the reason why no one has ever seen it in flower, but it is an uncanny tree, and if planted near a house causes the death of sons in the family.

The Sāl (*Shorea robusta*) is a birth-tree and takes the place of the Pīpal among the tribes of the central hills. When the tree blossoms in March–April the festival known as Bahbonga or Baparat, 'flower feast', of the Mundas, and Sārhūl of the Orāons, is held.[2] One of these tribes, the Agariya of Mirzapur, plant a branch of it in the marriage shed.[3]

The Jand (*Prosopis spicigera*) is sacred in the Panjab. Brahmans and Khatris, in order to avert the Evil Eye, do not dress young children in home-made clothes, but in those borrowed from neighbours, and in the third year take a child to a Jand tree, mark it with the sign of the Swastika, offer some sugar, tie nine threads round the trunk, and employ a Brahman to recite spells and dress the child in its first suit.[4] The Jāt bridegroom, before setting out for the wedding, cuts with his sword a twig from the tree, makes offerings to Brahmans, and thus ensures the success of his marriage; one of the sections of the Khatris make a mother after child-birth sleep on the ground with seven thorns of the tree or of the Kīkar (*Acacia arabica*) under his pillow, and later on a Jand tree is cut and food is given to a kite.[5] It is known as Sami in the Deccan, and at the

[1] For details see *B. G.* ix, part i, 385 f.
[2] Dalton, 197 f., 213, 261; Sarat Chandra Roy, *Mundas*, 476 f.
[3] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 4.
[4] Rose, *Gloss.* i. 137.
[5] *Ibid.* i. 371, 517; *P. N. Q.* ii. 55.

Dasahra festival the Raja and his troops go in procession to the tree, shoot arrows at it, and put the fallen leaves in their turbans as protectives.[1]

The Aonla (*Emblica officinalis*) is considered propitious and chaste. It is worshipped in the month Kārttik (October–November) by feeding Brahmans under it, threads are tied round it, and perambulations made; this rite is believed to free a man of the sin of having cheated somebody, and prayers are offered for the fertility of women, animals, and crops. The ceremony ends with a reverential bow before the tree.[2] Krishna wears a necklace of its berries which are offered to him in October–November, with tamarind and sugar-cane when he is solemnly wedded to the Tulasi or sacred basil.[3]

The beautiful Mahua (*Bassia latifolia*) is held sacred by the forest tribes who eat its succulent corolla tubes, distil spirits from them, and use the tree in their marriage rites. Gonds bury infants under it, as it is supposed that their spirits will suck the liquor from it and be nourished as if by their mothers' milk; an adult may be cremated under it in the hope that it will give him a supply of liquor in the next world, but the wood is not used in house-building as it is believed to be liable to a lightning stroke, possibly because the tree is lofty and conspicuous in the landscape.[4] Gonds in Bengal fasten the corpse of an adult in an erect posture to the tree, a special local custom to which no parallel has been traced.[5] The Bhuiya bride and bridegroom take branches of the tree in their hand, go with them to a tank or stream, steep the branches in water, and bathe, and on their return walk round a branch of the tree set up by the tribal Baiga or medicine-man.[6]

When Kandhs found a village the first act is to plant a Semal or cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*) consecrated to the village godling in the centre of the site, and other forest tribes believe it to be the seat of more terrible deities than the Pīpal, 'because their superintendence is confined exclusively to the neighbourhood, and having their attention less occupied, they can venture to make a more minute scrutiny into the conduct of the people

[1] *Folk-lore*, xxvi. 36 f.
[2] *P. N. Q.* ii. 74; Elliot, *Gloss.* 26; Nelson, *Jabalpur Gaz.* i. 896.
[3] *B. G.* xvii. 23.
[4] Russell, *T. C.* iii. 91; *id.*, *Seoni Gaz.* i. 15.
[5] Dalton, 283.
[6] *Ibid.* 148.

round them '.[1] The wood is often used to make the post round which the pair march at marriage and the parrot images set up during the rite.

The Nīm (*Melia azadirachta*), probably from the bitterness of its leaves, is associated with purification and with the godlings of disease. In Bombay it is said to be sprung from the Amrita or nectar of the gods, and people eat the leaves on New Year's Day.[2] When Chamār children in the Central Provinces fall ill the sorcerer waves a branch over them, and taking ashes in his hand blows them at it.[3] After a funeral mourners chew the leaves and spit them out as a mode of purification and to mark complete severance from the dead. In Bombay Nīm leaves and cow's urine are usually kept at the entrance of the lying-in room to save mother and child from evil spirits; in Ahmadnagar when a man is bitten by a snake he is taken to Bahiroba's temple, crushed Nīm leaves mixed with chillies are administered, and the branches are waved over his head.[4] In the United Provinces Doms regard the tree sacred to Sītala, the small-pox goddess, or to Devi, and Kurmis worship the tree under which they place an image of Devi.[5] The tree is also connected with the Sun, as in the story of Nīmbarak, 'the Sun in a Nīm tree', who invited to dinner a Bairāgi whose rules forbade him to eat except by daylight. When dinner was delayed after sundown Surājnārāyan, the Sun god, descended from a Nīm tree and continued shining till dinner was over.[6]

The coco-nut, doubtless on account of its milk, is connected with fertility, and its resemblance to a human head suggests its substitution for a human sacrifice to the Mother goddess in her terrible form as Ambābhavāni.[7] Mahārs in Western India worship their deities in the form of coco-nuts or betel-nuts, and Chamārs instal a coco-nut in the name of their ancestors, renewing it yearly and distributing the kernel as sacred food;[8] Balindra, the Vakkal godling, is an unhusked coco-nut. Coco-nuts are often given by keepers of shrines to women who desire

[1] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 385.
[2] Balaji Sitaram Kothari, 1; Campbell, *Notes*, 234.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 421.
[4] Campbell, *loc. cit.*
[5] *P. N. Q.* iii. 38.
[6] Growse, *Mathura*, 194; *E. R. E.* ix. 373.
[7] Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, 323; *N. I. N. Q.* iv. 148, v. 78.
[8] *B. G.* x. 418, xv, part i, 203; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 267, ii. 53.

children, and Rajputs and other high castes send it to the bridegroom as a proposal of marriage.[1]

Some varieties of the acacia which produce gum and catechu are respected, and the hard wood is used in making the Arani or fire-drill. The leaves and twigs of the Khair (*Acacia catechu*) keep off the Evil Eye and witches and wizards dare not approach the tree.[2] You can cure fever at a Kīkar or Babūl tree (*Acacia arabica*) if you tie seven cotton threads from your left big toe to your head, then tie the hanks round the tree and embrace the trunk seven times, an attention which so pleases it that it will cause the disease to leave you.[3] Beriya vagrants in the United Provinces, when a person is attacked by the Evil Eye, put some Babūl thorns in an earthen pot fixed mouth downwards, wave a shoe over it and say, 'Evil Glance! Leave the sick man!'[4] But the 'sanctity' of the Babūl makes it also dangerous. If it is planted near a house it will ruin the occupant, a belief possibly based on the reddish juice, like blood, which exudes from it.[5] If you water the tree for thirteen days you acquire control of the evil spirit which occupies it. They tell of a man at Sahāranpur who did this, and when his corpse was carried to cremation, no sooner was his pyre lighted than he got up and lived many years after. The ghost of a man cremated with the wood will not rest quietly, and any one who sleeps on a bed made from it will be afflicted with evil dreams. When in the writer's camp it was proposed to mend a bed, which had been accidentally broken, with this wood, an old servant advised that it should be kept for the use of some padre or clergyman on a visit, whose sanctity would naturally protect him.

The plantain from its vigorous growth is naturally an emblem of fertility. Leaves of it are hung on the marriage shed, and a branch is placed near the post or holy fire round which the pair march. Kochh in Bengal make the shed with plantain stalks, and in Sambalpur a plantain tree draped in cloth is placed to the right of the image of the goddess Durga, representing Vana Durga, or 'she of the forest', a godling of the jungle tribes.[6]

The brilliant scarlet flowers, red juice, and numerous seeds

[1] Tod, i. 317, 323, &c. [2] Heber, i. 287. [3] *P. N. Q.* i. 40.
[4] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 247. [5] *P. N. Q.* iii. 44.
[6] Risley, *T. C.* i. 496; *J. R. A. S.* 1906, p. 361.

also connect the pomegranate with fertility. Parsis, following the example of the Persians, venerate it, using its twigs to form the Barsom or Moresona, the sacred broom; its seeds are scattered over a child at initiation to scare evil spirits, and the juice is squeezed into the mouth of the dying.[1]

The tamarind is a favourite of the Musalmāns, and the best specimens of the tree are found near their old settlements. One of the chief Nāgar pregnancy rites is the drinking of its juice.[2] A notable tamarind stands over the tomb at Gwalior of Tansen, the famous minister of Akbar's court, and its leaves, though they are bitter and injurious to those suffering from sore throat, are eaten by singers to improve their voices.[3]

The leaves of the Siras (*Albizzia lebek*) hung on a rope over the entrance of a village are a potent charm against cattle murrain, and this efficacy is increased if there are added a potsherd on which a Faqīr has written some hocus-pocus and rude models of wooden sandals, rakes, ploughshares, and other implements.

The mango, of which groves are found in most villages in the plains, is valued for its valuable fruit and pleasant shade. In Gujarāt on the bright or dark 7th of the month Sāvan (July–August) a young mango tree is planted near the hearth and worshipped by women to protect their children from small-pox; a post of the wood is set up at marriage when Ganpati or Ganesa, patron of undertakings, is worshipped; in the Sānti or disease-quieting rite branches of it are thrown into the fire; in the spring the young leaves and buds typify Madana, god of love, and they are offered in the worship of Siva in the month of Māgh (January–February); a branch is often planted in the centre of the wedding booth.[4] When you see a flower on a mango, shut your eyes and get some one to lead you to the tree, rub the flowers in your hands, and you will acquire power of curing scorpion stings by waving your hands over the place. But this power lasts only for a year, and the charm must be performed at the next flowering of the tree.

The Tulasi or holy basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) is one of the things produced at the churning of the ocean, and it is sacred to

[1] Campbell, *Notes*, 229; Dosabhai Framji, ii. 166 f.; *B. G.* ix, part ii, 223.
[2] Thurston, *T. C.* v. 339.
[3] *Āīn-i-Akbari*, i. 406, 612 f.; Sleeman, *Rambles*, 562; Rose, *Gloss.* iii. 110.
[4] *B. G.* ix, part i, 382; Enthoven, *T. C.* i. 29, 57.

Vishnu. Its 'sanctity' probably depends on the aromatic nature of its leaves and its frequent use in native medicine.[1] Many legends have been invented to account for the veneration paid to it. In one story Tulasi was a young girl who practised austerities in the hope that Vishnu would take her to wife. But Lakshmi, her real consort, cursed her and changed her into the plant. But Vishnu consoled her by promising that he would be the Sālagrāma ammonite and remain always beside her. Accordingly both of them are annually married.[2] This is done on the bright 11th of Kārttik (October–November). In Gujarāt a childless pair act as parents of the bride, and a friend brings the ammonite, and with his wife acts as those of the bridegroom. The rites are done in the orthodox way. The owner of the plant presents jewels to the stone, the owner of which and his wife receive gifts as representing the bridegroom. Women walk a hundred and eight times round a Pīpal tree and a Tulasi planted together in order to relieve barrenness, and a basil leaf is put in the mouth of the dead. This wedding of the Tulasi done at the opening of the cold season is the signal for Hindu marriages to begin.[3] The Tulasi is often planted on the top of a little masonry pillar near the house, when women tend it and pour over it the water in which Vishnu's ammonite has been bathed.

The Palāsa, which gives its name to the battle-field of Plassey, known also as the Dhāk (*Butea frondosa*) owes its 'sanctity' to its habit of dropping its leaves when it flowers, the upper and outer branches standing out like sprays of unbroken scarlet. These are sometimes used to dye the powder scattered at the Holi or spring festival, and the wood, said to contain the seed of fire, is employed in fire-making. A leaf of the Soma plant or a feather of Gāyatri, the impersonation of the holy sun hymn, was shot off by an archer, and this falling on earth produced the Palāsa.[4] Like the Bilva or Bel tree, the Palāsa is so 'sacred' that it must not be used to make a Brahman's staff.[5] The triple leaf of the tree represents the triad—Brahma, Siva, Vishnu; the leaves are used as platters in holy rites; from its wood is made

[1] Watt, v. 442.
[2] Ward, ii. 205.
[3] *B. G.* ix, part i, 387 f.; Balaji Sitaram Kothari, 57: for the legends and ritual see B. A. Gupte, 233 ff.
[4] *S. B. E.* xliv. 122.
[5] Manu, *Laws*, ii. 45.

the Yūpa or sacrificial post, and it is used in cooking the funeral offerings.

The astringency of its bark, its medicinal qualities, and its tripartite leaves, suggesting its connexion with Siva, account for the reverence paid to the Bilva or Bel (*Aegle marmelos*). In honour of Siva married girls on the bright 9th of Bhādon (August–September) throw flowers on the tree and rub the trunk with sandalwood paste. Some tribes in Central and Western India regard as their most solemn oath that on the Belbhandār, or 'storehouse', that is, on a pot of water or corn, turmeric powder and leaves of the Bel tree, all laid on a blanket.[1]

The bamboo is remarkable on account of its manifold utilities. Mahārs and Māng outcasts show much respect to it, and make the pair at marriage stand in bamboo baskets; Gāros and Kachāris sacrifice before a bamboo planted in the ground; Birhors worship their godling Darha in the form of a split bamboo; Muāsis make the pair at marriage walk round a bamboo in a bamboo shed; and the ascetic Sannyāsi should carry a bamboo staff with seven knots.[2]

The Chili or Himalayan pencil cedar (*Juniperus macropodes*) is valued by the Kāfirs, who hang the branches on shrines, use it for aspersion, wave the ignited branches at rites when they emit a dense perfumed smoke, and the officiant wears a plume-like branch of it in front of his head-dress; the tree is valued because it keeps off evil influences and promotes the inspiration of the spirit medium.[3] The Himalayan cedar (*Cedrus deodara*) is, as its name Deodār implies, 'the tree of the gods'. In Kangra it used to be the custom to sacrifice a girl to an old cedar tree, which was cut down long ago, and the families of the village were forced in turn to supply a victim.[4] As is the case with the Chili, it is ceremonially burnt in the Hindu Kush, and the Daniyal or sibyl with a cloth over her head inhales the divine smoke till she is seized with convulsions, when she breaks out in a chant loudly repeated by her audience.[5]

[1] Kennedy, 145; Malcolm, *Central India*, i. 186 note.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 189; Dalton, 109, 220, 234; Dubois, 534.
[3] Robertson, 395, 421, 425, 429, 461, 467, 470; *J. R. A. S.* 1901, pp. 466, 470; Watt, iv. 554 f., and cf. ii. 646.
[4] Ibbetson, 120.
[5] Biddulph, 97; Oldham, 91 f.; *E. R. E.* iv. 400 f.

The question of marriage to trees is not without difficulty. We have already discussed the custom of marrying a widow or widower to a tree before, or in connexion with, the actual rite of union, in which the intention seems to be that the tree or plant acts as the representative or surrogate of the person contracting the marriage, and to it is diverted the wrath of the deceased partner, who resents the usurpation of his or her rights by the new-comer.[1]

But there are other instances which cannot be readily brought within this category. In some cases it is part of the ritual in the case of virgin brides and bridegrooms. The Bāgdi bridegroom in Bengal early on the wedding morning before he goes to fetch his bride goes through a mock marriage with a Mahua tree (*Bassia latifolia*). He embraces it and daubs it with vermilion, his right wrist is bound to it with thread, and after he is released from the tree the thread is used to attach a bunch of Mahua leaves to his wrist.[2] The Kharwār bride and bridegroom before the marriage rite must go through a form of marriage with a mango tree, or at least with a branch of it.[3] The Kurmis pair, at their own house early on the wedding morning, are married to trees, the bride to a Mahua, the bridegroom to a mango. The bride wears on her right wrist a bracelet of Mahua leaves, walks round the tree seven times, and then sits on her mother's lap or on an earthen platform erected near the trunk of the tree. While sitting in this position her right hand and right ear are tied to the tree with thread by her elder sister's husband or some other male member of the family, and she is made to chew Mahua leaves which are afterwards eaten by her mother. Finally, lamps are lighted round the tree and it is solemnly worshipped by all present. The bridegroom performs the same rite with a mango tree, but with this difference that he moves round it nine times instead of seven.[4] The Munda bride used to touch a Mahua tree with vermilion, clasp it with her hands, and she was tied to it, while the bridegroom performed the same rite with a mango tree, but this custom seems to have been discontinued.[5] According to

[1] p. 198 above.
[2] Risley, *T. C.* i. 39.
[3] *Ibid.* i. 475.
[4] *Ibid.* i. 531.
[5] Dalton, 194; Risley, *T. C.* ii. 102.

another authority the bride goes in the bridegroom's litter to a mango tree, marks its trunk with moistened rice flour, and ties a thread round it, the tree being regarded as a witness to the marriage.[1] In the case of a virgin marriage Rautiyas wed the pair to a mango tree, and Santāls at an early stage of the wedding marry bride and bridegroom separately to a Mahua tree.[2]

A story told by the Buddhist pilgrim Hiuen Tsang illustrates the custom. A Brahman student regretted that he was not married.

'On this his companion, in sport, replied, "We must seek then for your good a bride and her friends." Two persons represented father and mother of the bridegroom and two others the parents of the bride, and as they were sitting under a Pātali tree they called it the "tree of the son-in-law". They collected fruit and water, followed all the nuptial customs and asked that a time should be fixed. The father of the supposed bride plucked a flowering twig, gave it to the student and said, "This is your excellent partner, be graciously pleased to accept her." The student's heart rejoiced as he took her to himself, and when the others said that it was late and they would go home he preferred to remain. In the end, an old man appeared leading a maiden and said, "This is your worship's wife." Seven days passed in carousing and music, and when the friends of the student went to seek him they found him alone in the shade of a tree, as if facing a superior guest. They asked him to return, but he refused. When he came back he described his adventures and took them to the place, where they found that the tree had become a great mansion, and the old man received them kindly and entertained them. After a year was accomplished the lady gave birth to a son, and her husband proposed to take her home. But the old man built a palace for them, and this is why the place once known as Kusumapura, "saffron city", was called Pātaliputra, "the city of the son of the Pātali", the modern Patna, which became the Maurya capital of the Empire.'[3]

There is some difference of opinion regarding the interpretation of these rites. In cases where the tree is supposed to die after the rite we may assume that the marriage to it is intended

[1] Sarat Chandra Roy, 447.
[2] Risley, *T. C.* ii. 201, 229.
[3] Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, ii. 83 ff.: the legend explains the name of the city, but Waddell (*E. R. E.* ix. 677) derives the name from Patala, the seaport at the mouth of the Indus.

to divert to it some danger which otherwise would attack the wedded pair. In cases of marriage to a tree of virgin brides and bridegrooms it is noteworthy that the trees used are generally those which bear blossoms or fruit, and bearing this fact in view the present writer suggested that the intention was to bring the pair into close association with the productive powers of Nature, and thus to convey their fertility to bride and bridegroom.[1] In this connexion the case of the tomb of Mūsa Sohāg at Ahmadabad is suggestive. In the mosque enclosure is a very old, large Champa tree (*Michelia champaca*), the branches of which are hung with glass bangles. 'Those anxious to have children come and offer the saint bangles, 7, 11, 13, 21, 29, or 126, according to their means and importunity. If the saint favours their wish the Champa tree snatches up the bangles and wears them on its arms.'[2] Mr. Hodson, who has discussed the question at length,[3] adopts this fertility theory with the reservation that the tree being associated with death-rites, 'its explanation is to be sought in the definite view that the spirit part of the individual is associated with the fruit tree, and the physical home of that spirit is to be provided with the marriage'. Kurmis of Bengal adopt a sort of 'scapegoat' theory, 'that by it all misfortunes of the bride and bridegroom are transferred to the tree, which acts as a sort of scapegoat', a view which is approved by Sir J. Frazer.[4] Another cognate instance of this may be quoted, that of the Banias of the Panjab who, when they ascertain from the horoscope that the influence of certain stars is likely to lead to early widowhood, dress up a pitcher of water to resemble a boy, and the girl is married to this pseudo-bridegroom. The rite is then repeated in an informal way with the real bridegroom, and the evil is believed to fall upon the pitcher and not on the bridegroom, thus averting the danger of early widowhood.[5]

In some cases the tree is apparently a mere substitute for the bride or bridegroom. Khadāls in the Central Provinces, when a man reaches the age of thirty and a woman twenty, and are

[1] *J. R. A. I.* xxviii. 242.
[2] *B. G.* iv. 281 f.
[3] *Man in India*, i. 207 f.
[4] Risley, *T. C.* i. 531; Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', ii. 57 note: cf. Westermarck, *H. H. M.* ii. 523 ff.
[5] Harikishan Kaul, *C. R.* i. 284.

both still unmarried, marry him or her to a mango, Semal, cotton tree, or Jāmun, the black plum (*Eugenia jambolana*). 'After this no second ceremony need be performed on subsequent union with a wife or husband.'[1] Kunbis in Baroda, if a suitable husband cannot be found and a girl would reach maturity before the next general tribal rite of marriage, which occurs at intervals of nine, ten, or eleven years, marry her to a bunch of flowers which is then thrown into a well or river, and the girl, now regarded to be a widow, can at any time be married by the less regular rite.[2]

Or the tree or flowers may be replaced by some material object. In the Central Provinces a Gānda girl who arrives at maturity unmarried is wedded to a spear stuck up in the courtyard, and is then given away to any one who will take her; a Binjhwār girl under the same circumstance is wedded to an arrow, the tribal symbol or mark; and a Chāsa girl may be wedded to an arrow or flower, or she goes through the rite with a man of her own caste, and when a suitable husband is found she is married to him by the ceremony used in the case of widow marriage.[3] In Nepāl 'every Newār girl, while a child, is married to a Bel-fruit, which after the ceremony is thrown into some sacred river. When she arrives at puberty a husband is selected for her, but should the marriage prove unpleasant she can divorce herself by the simple process of placing a betel-nut under her husband's pillow and walking off. A Newārin is never a widow, as the Bel-fruit to which she was first married is presumed to be always in existence.'[4]

[1] Russell, *T. C.* i. 376.
[2] G. H. Desai, *C. R.* i. 173.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 330, 426, iii. 15.
[4] D. Wright, 33: for other instances of mock marriage see O'Malley, *C. R.* i. 323 ff.

XVII

THE BLACK ART: WITCHCRAFT

In the preceding pages many instances have been quoted of the harmless or benevolent forms of magic—sympathetic, homoeopathic, contagious—which are designed to act as prophylactics against the influence of evil spirits, or the Evil Eye, and to promote the fertility of human beings, animals, and crops.[1] These forms of magic are not only tolerated but encouraged, being performed for worthy objects and in the general interest of the community. Black magic, as it is popularly called, is of a different type: it is employed for anti-social ends, for evil purposes such as the destruction of an enemy, the promotion of quarrels and the like, and the witch or warlock who practises it claims to effect his purpose by gaining control of some evil spirit whom he forces to obey him. It is unnecessary here to discuss the more general question, whether magic is antecedent to or later than religion. The view accepted by one school of anthropologists is that formulated by Sir A. Lyall by a review of the Indian evidence that the witch 'is one who professes to work marvels not through the aid or counsel of the supernatural beings in whom he believes as much as the rest, but by certain occult faculties and devices which he conceives himself to possess'; 'while the priest, or fetish-keeper, or oracle-monger is held in reverence as the ambassador of a power on whom it is hopeless to make war, the witch is always feared, and usually deported, because the priest disclaims all responsibility for the ill inflicted by the angry or malevolent deities, whereas the witch may be made to pay by the person'.[2] But this caution may be added that by 'priest' the Indian Brahman is meant, who does not practise only the harmless or benevolent forms of magic: in fact, both types are often used by both Brahman and witch. But, on the whole, black magic is antagonistic to orthodox Brahmanism, though, particularly by

[1] Frazer, *G. B.* 'The Magic Art', i. 54 ff.
[2] *Asiatic Studies*, i. 106 f.

those who follow the Tāntrik school, the practice of black magic may be in some cases tolerated or adopted by the priesthood. Manu classes among 'open rogues' those 'who live by teaching the performance of auspicious ceremonies, sanctimonious hypocrites, and fortune-tellers'; 'for all incantations intended to destroy life, for magic rites with roots practised by persons not related to him against whom they are directed, and for various kind of sorceries', the offender is to be punished by fine; but 'the Brāhmana may punish his foes by his own power alone: speech, indeed, is the weapon of the Brāhmana, with that he may slay his enemies'.[1] Sir J. G. Frazer supports the view that magic preceded religion, and that the development of the latter followed on the recognition of the inefficiency of the former; but other writers, like Dr. E. S. Hartland, argue that magic as little preceded religion as religion preceded magic, both springing from a single root, both merely the two sides of a single shield.[2] In Northern India among Hindus and Musalmāns of the lower classes magical beliefs and practices are so closely linked with religion that it is practically impossible to disentangle them.

The belief in, and the practice of, black magic is universal both among the jungle tribes and the lower classes of dwellers in the plains. The only alleged exception in the case of the former is that of the Juāngs who 'appear to be free from the belief in witchcraft, which is the bane of the Kols and perniciously influences nearly all other classes in the Jungle and Tributary Mahāls. They have not, like the Kharias, the reputation of being deeply skilled in sorcery. They have in their own language no terms for "God", for "heaven", or "hell", and, so far as I can learn, no idea of a future state.'[3] But later inquiries show that in the case of religion General Dalton was probably mistaken, or since he wrote they may have come under Hindu influence, and his statement regarding magic is perhaps equally inaccurate among the tribe in their present condition.[4] The power of magic-working is specially attributed to the more isolated and distant tribes who are looked on by the northern

[1] Manu, *Laws*, ix. 258, 290, xi. 31–4.
[2] Frazer, *op. cit.* i. 233 f.; Hartland, *Ritual and Belief*, 26 ff.; *E. R. E.* viii. 245 ff.; Westermarck, *M. I.* ii. 584 ff., 649 ff.
[3] Dalton, 157.
[4] Risley, *T. C.* i. 353.

peasant with disgust and fear. Tribes like Bhīls, Santāls, Thārus, and the like are notorious for their magical powers, and the same may be said of nomadic and criminal castes, such as Nats, Kanjars, Hābūras, or Sānsias. 'The Banjāras of Central India are terribly vexed by witchcraft, to which their wandering and precarious existence especially exposes them in the shape of fever, rheumatism, and dysentery. Solemn inquiries are still held in the wild jungle where these people camp out like gypsies, and many an unlucky hag has been strangled by sentence of their secret tribunals.'[1] The wild Savaras of Bengal and the Central Provinces are considered to be great sorcerers; Bhoksas of the sub-Himalayan Tarāi have gained a reputation for sorcery and witchcraft, and the name of the tribe is applied to sorcerers in Garhwāl; Thārus in the same region are notorious for the same reason, and in the plains Thāruhat or 'Thāru land' is a synonym for witchland.[2] In the plains Chamārs or leather-dressers, whose trade is disliked by orthodox Hindus, are well-known witches, practising both black and white magic.[3] Lushais maintain that the tribes to the north of them are very proficient in witchcraft, and Chins consider Lushais so expert in the craft that in the 1890 expedition some of the chiefs besought the British general not to allow any Lushais to venture within sight of their villages, lest they should by merely looking at it cause fearful misfortunes.[4] The higher form of the earlier and purer Buddhism was in its later stages infected by Hindu magical beliefs, and Bhāi Guru Dās warned the Sikhs that 'paying attention to omens, the nine grihs [graha, 'planet'], the twelve signs of the Zodiac, incantations, magic, divination by lines, and by the voice, is all vanity.[5]

The witch Dāyan, Dākini, is known in mythology as Asrapa, 'blood-drinker', an imp or fiend attending on Kāli, an eater of human flesh, because this is regarded as the source of the witch's power, as in Southern India Kāli descends on a man when he has drunk the blood of a goat.[6] Witches in the folk-tales frequent burning-grounds and cemeteries; they can find anything

[1] Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, i. 117 f.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 507; Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 60, iv. 405.
[3] Briggs, 234.
[4] Shakespear, 110.
[5] *E. R. E.* viii. 255 ff.; Waddell, *Buddhism*, 387 ff.; Macauliffe, iv. 249.
[6] Whitehead, *Village Gods of South India*, 102 f.; Thurston, *T. C.* iv. 187.

on earth, open or patch up the sky, restore the dead to life, set fire to water, turn stones into wax, separate lovers, turn the hero or heroine into any shape they choose, control the weather, cause storms and tempests, or produce lameness by measuring the footprints of their victims, and these are not like our nursery tales, but facts which people of the lower culture firmly believe.[1] Some of them acquire these powers by eating filth. A female witch is usually lovely, scrupulously clean in dress and person, and decorated with a streak of vermilion in the parting of her hair, the symbol of coverture. They cast the Evil Eye on children, and they are reputed to exhume the corpses of children, anoint them with oil, and bring them to life again to serve some occult purpose, a belief which in its most odious form appears in the Odi or Oti cult, 'breaking the human body', practised by the Pariahs of Madras.[2] Dhanwārs in the Central Provinces detect a witch by the sunken and gloomy appearance of the eye, a passionate temperament, or by being found naked in a grave-yard at night, as the only business of a witch in such a place can be to disinter or revive a corpse.[3]

A witch gains special power by obtaining control of a demon and making him obedient to his or her will. In Bengal this is effected in the following way: when a man dies on the 15th day of a Hindu month, being a Saturday which is unlucky as it is ruled by Sani, you should go with your master in magic to the cremation or burial ground, and seat him on a tree at least a mile from the spot. Then take the body to the cremation ground, lay it with its feet to the south, the kingdom of Yama, and bind it securely to four iron pegs fixed in the ground. Sit on the breast of the corpse with a bottle of wine beside you, and repeat Mantras or spells one hundred and eight times on a rosary made of human bones. Drink some wine and pour some down the mouth of the corpse, on which it will make faces at you, and try to get up and fight you. But fear not, for it can do no harm so long as you retain your courage. During all this time you must keep on shouting to your instructor and you should follow his advice. As you go on repeating the charms animals

[1] Temple–Steel, 395; Somadeva, Index, s.v. Witches.

[2] Thurston, *T. C.* vi. 124 ff.; *Bulletin Madras Museum*, iii. 312 ff.; Anantha Krishna Iyer, i. 76 ff.

[3] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 498.

of hideous form will appear, but heed them not. At last a cat will come and ask you what you want. You must answer that you need the service of the demon attached to the corpse on which you are sitting. This the cat will grant. Then make the Homa fire-sacrifice, pouring meat and wine on the flames, mark your forehead with the ashes of the sacrifice as a protective, and go home, taking care not to look back or answer any questions addressed to you. The ghost or demon will then be your slave for the rest of your life.[1]

In Northern India the worker of black magic is the Ojha, a term derived from Sanskrit Upādhyāya, 'teacher', and the Syāna, 'cunning man', who follow the traditional methods handed down from their predecessors. Their stock-in-trade is a collection of Mantras or spells, many based on the magic of the Tāntras, 'rule, ritual', used in the cult of the Sakti or female energy, by which they are supposed to acquire the power of controlling spirits or demons, and of forcing them to obey the orders of the sorcerer.

The art is acquired by a course of instruction. In Gangpur, Bengal, 'there is an old woman, professor of witchcraft, who stealthily instructs the young girls. The latter are eager to be taught, and are not considered proficient till a pine tree selected to be experimented on is destroyed by the potency of their Mantras or charms, so that the wife a man takes to his bosom has probably done her tree, and is confident that she can, if she pleases, dispose of her husband in the same manner, if he makes himself obnoxious'.[2] When Santāl girls are initiated into magic they are said to be taken by force and made to lead tigers about, to make them fearless. They are taken to the chief Bongas or spirits and told to invoke them, and they are taught Mantras, or charms, and songs. The novice is made to come out of the house with a lamp in her hand and a broom tied round her waist, and she is taken to the Bongas and married to one who approves of her. He pays the usual bride-price and applies vermilion to her forehead. After this she may marry a man in the usual way, and he also pays the bride-price. After instruction she is made to take her degree by extracting a man's

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* v. 57: cf. Thurston, *T. C.* vi. 231; Ja'far Sharīf.
[2] Dalton, 323.

liver and cooking it with rice in a new pot, after which she and the young woman who initiates her eat the food together. When she has eaten this food she can never forget what she has learnt, but if she refuses to take the final step and will not eat she goes mad or dies.[1] In the Central Provinces it is said that a man sometimes finds it expedient to marry into a family the members of which are reputed to be workers in black magic, so that he may be able with his wife's aid to counteract the machinations of other adepts.[2] In Bombay when a Guru or teacher wishes to initiate a candidate into the mysteries of the black art, he directs his pupil to watch for a favourable opportunity for beginning the study, that being the death of a woman in child-bed. He watches the funeral and ascertains who are the bearers of the corpse. He then collects in a tin box earth from the foot-prints of the two rear bearers, watches where the corpse has been burnt, and goes home. Next day he goes to the spot and puts some of the ashes in the box, and on a suitable day, that of the new moon or an eclipse, he goes to the cremation ground at midnight, sits naked on the ground, burns a little incense, and repeats the incantation taught him by the Guru. Thus he brings the spirit known as Hadal, the ghost of a woman who died in pregnancy or child-birth,[3] under his control, and by her help he is able to annoy or injure any one he pleases.[4]

In Central India witches are supposed to work by the agency of their familiars, known as Bīr, 'heroes', and they are most powerful on the 14th, 15th, and 29th of each month, and in particular at the Dīvāli or Feast of Lights, and the Nauratra, the nine days of the month Asvin (September–October), devoted to the worship of the goddess Durga.[5] At other times witches appear, dress, talk, and eat like ordinary human beings, but

'when the fit is on them they are sometimes seen with eyes glaring red, their hair dishevelled and bristled, while their heads are sometimes turned round in a strange, convulsive manner. On the nights of those days they are supposed to go abroad, to ride about on tigers and other wild animals, and if they desire to go on the water alligators come like beasts of the forest at

[1] Bompas, *Folk-lore of the Santal Parganas*, 424.
[2] Grant, Introd. cxxx.
[3] See p. 203 above.
[4] Campbell, *Notes*, 204: cf. Ja'far Sharif, 218 ff.
[5] See B. A. Gupte, 181 ff.

their call, and they disport in rivers and lakes upon their backs till dawn of day, about which period they always return home, and assume their usual forms and occupations.' [1]

The familiar animals of the witch, in whose shape he or she often appear, are the tiger and the cat.

'A Kol, tried for the murder of one of these wizards, stated in his defence—and he spoke as if he believed implicitly what he was narrating—that his wife having been killed by a tiger in his presence, he stealthily followed the animal as it glided away after gratifying its appetite, and saw that it entered the house of one Pusa, a Kol, whom he knew. He called out Pusa's relatives, and when they heard his story they not only credited it but declared that they had long suspected Pusa of such power and acts; and, entering his house, where they found him and not the tiger, they delivered him bound into the hands of his accusers, who at once slew him. In explanation of their having so acted they deposed that Pusa had one night devoured an entire goat and roared like a tiger while he was eating it; and on another occasion he informed his friends that he had a longing for a particular bullock, and that very night that bullock was killed by a tiger.' [2]

In the Jawhār State, Bombay, Koli women are believed to take tiger form and to kill the cattle of their neighbours; more especially they become cats or dogs and eat poultry of their friends or enemies.[3] Many like tales are told among the forest tribes of the Vindhyan and Kaimūr ranges, and some Savaras are said to be able to change into ghostly tigers; one of them was supposed to have devoured a sick man's wandering soul, and so the patient could not recover.[4]

Jungle folk say that the cat is the tiger's aunt and taught him everything except to climb a tree. Zālim Singh, the Rajput chief, believed that cats were connected with witches, and on one occasion when he supposed that he was enchanted he ordered that every cat should be driven out of the cantonment.[5] A British officer once speared a hyena, well known as the steed on which a witch sallied forth at night; evil was predicted, and he subsequently met with a dangerous fall when hunting.[6]

[1] Malcolm, *Central India*, ii. 212.
[2] Dalton, 200 f.
[3] Campbell, *Notes*, 258.
[4] *J. A. S. Bo.* i. 260 f.
[5] Malcolm, *Central India*, ii. 214 note.
[6] Tod, i. 88 f. note.

A person supposed to be a witch is often subjected to tests or ordeals. 'Suicide and witch-dipping in rivers present both sides of the same conception, the acceptance or rejection by the divine element.'[1] Hence a favourite test of witches is to throw them into water; if they sank they were innocent, but if they unhappily came to the surface their league with the powers of darkness was apparent. This test was approved by Zālim Singh, who used also to tie a grain-bag full of cayenne pepper over their heads in the belief that if they could withhold their tears they might justly be deemed to be witches.[2] Orāons depute the identification of witches to the Ojha, who pours water into a brass plate and drops into it a grain of Kulthi or horse-grain (*Dolichos biflorus*). As he looks at its shadow in the water he sees the woman who has caused the mischief, describes her, and at last pronounces her name, on which the outraged people go to her house, abuse her, and try to force her to confess by threats. If she denies the charge they have recourse to the Sokha or 'cunning man', and take a handful of rice to him. He drops some incense and a few of the rice grains on some burning charcoal, sits near the fire, shakes his head violently and falls into a trance, always staring at the fire. He puts all sorts of questions as if speaking to himself, and answers them. After some time he comes to his senses and asks what he has been saying. When they tell him he asks if he has given a true description of the witch, but if they are not satisfied he is ready to name her in consideration of a fee of five rupees.[3]

When demons beset the Bhīls and cause sickness they summon the Barva, the hereditary sorcerer, and when the disease is beyond the reach of his skill he attributes it to a witch. He performs various rites to identify him or her, by means of music and waving peacock's feathers round the patient's head. In some cases an old woman is identified and forced by torture to disclose her name. For in order to deal with the case they must know her name, her reason for troubling her victim, and the terms on which she will be appeased.[4] The same tribe in Central India inflict savage punishments on witches. One woman was

[1] Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, i. 19.
[2] Tod, iii. 1615.
[3] Dehon, 150 f.
[4] *B. G.* xii. 86 f. note.

forced to drink water from a shoemaker's hand and beaten to death. On inquiry it was alleged that after being turned out of the village she came back and asked for a leopard to ride on, but as no leopard was forthcoming they mounted her on an ass, blackened her face, made her eat from a scavenger's hand, and expelled her. The Bhīl chief alleged that he heard her barking like a dog, and saw her attempting to bite passers-by till she died.[1] Bhīls in Gujarāt subject the witch to various ordeals. She is tied by the heels to a branch of a tree, swung to and fro, and if the branch does not break and she suffers no injury she is certainly a witch. Sometimes a basket full of chillies is put over her face, and if she suffers no harm she is certainly guilty. Under the pressure of these ordeals she often confesses and says that she will cure the patient if she gets a male buffalo, a goat, or a cock. If the patient recovers the animal named is sacrificed by cutting its throat, the blood is caught in a dish and given hot to the witch to drink. If the sick man dies she is often driven into the jungle to die of hunger or fall a prey to some wild beast. Cases are reported from the Pānch Mahāls of a witch being burnt to death or cut in pieces with a sword.[2] When Kolis in Bombay suspect that a death was caused by witchcraft they examine the ashes of the corpse to see if they can find any unconsumed bits of cloth or some article of food. If they find a bit of cloth or some grain they believe that this was the cause of death, and that it was worked into the dead man's intestines by a witch who had been employed to do this by some one whose cloth or grain the deceased had stolen.[3]

In Bilāspur District, Central Provinces, one of the most noted witch-finders dealt with them in a special way:

'The first effort was to get the villagers to describe the marked eccentricities of the old women of the community, and when this had been detailed his experience soon enabled him to seize upon some ugly or unlucky idiosyncracy which indicated in unmistakable clearness the unhappy offender. If no conclusion could be arrived at in this way he lighted an ordinary earthen lamp, and repeating consecutively each woman's name

[1] Luard, *Eth. Surv.*, art. 'Bhīl', 28 f.

[2] *B. G.* ix, part i, 302 f.

[3] Enthoven, *T. C.* ii. 255.

he fixed on the witch or witches by the flicker of the wick when the man or woman was mentioned.'[1]

In Bastar:

'the usual mode of procedure when any one is suspected and accused of being a sorcerer is as follows. On the accused person being arrested a fisherman's net is bound round his head to prevent his escaping or bewitching his guards, and he is at once subjected to the preparatory tests. Two leaves of the Pīpal tree (*Ficus religiosa*), one representing him and the other his accuser, are thrown before his outstretched hands; if the leaf in his name falls uppermost he is supposed to be a suspicious character; if the leaf falls with the lower part upwards it is possible he may be innocent, and the popular feeling is in his favour. The following day the final test is applied: he is sewn into a sack, and in the presence of the heads of the village he is carried into water waist deep, and let down to the bottom; if the unhappy man cannot struggle up he is said, after a short pause, to be innocent, and the assembled elders quickly direct him to be taken out; if he manages, however, in his struggles for life to raise himself above the water he is adjudged guilty, and brought out to be dealt with for witchcraft. He is then beaten by the crowd, his head is shaved, and his front teeth are knocked out with a stone to prevent him from muttering incantations. All descriptions of filth are thrown at him: if he is of good caste hog's flesh is forced into his mouth; and, lastly, he is driven out of the country, followed by the abuse and execration of his enlightened countrymen. Women suspected of sorcery have to undergo the same ordeal; if found guilty, the same punishment is awarded them, and after being shaved, their hair is attached to a tree in some public place.'[2]

According to Manu, 'he whom the water forces not to come quickly up, who meets with no speedy misfortune, must be held innocent on the strength of his oath'.[3]

Many kinds of power are attributed to workers in the black art. The magician is able to devour the internal organs of his victims, to insert in them, or extract from them, certain substances. The greatest of wonders in Sind is the Jigarkhwār or Jigarkhor, 'the liver-eater',

'an individual who by glances and incantations can abstract a man's liver. Some aver that under certain conditions and at certain times he renders the person senseless upon whom he

[1] Grant, 110 f. [2] *Ibid.* 39. [3] *Laws*, viii. 115.

looks, and then takes from him what resembles the seed of a pomegranate, which he conceals for the time in the calf of his leg. During this interval the person whose liver is stolen remains unconscious, and when thus helpless the other throws the seed on the fire which spreads out like a plate. On this he partakes with his fellows and the unconscious victim dies. He can convey a knowledge of his art to whomsoever he wills, by giving him a portion of the food to eat and teaching him incantations. If he is caught in the act and his calf is cut open, and the seed extracted and given to his victim, the latter will recover. The followers of this art are mostly women. They can convey intelligence from long distances in a brief space of time, and if they be thrown into the river with a stone tied to them they will not sink. When it is desired to deprive one of them of this power they brand both sides of his head and the joints, fill his eyes with salt, suspend him for forty days in a subterraneous chamber, and some of them recite incantations over him. Though his power then no longer exists he is still able to recognize a liver-eater, and these pests are captured through his detection. He can also restore people to health by incantations or administering a certain drug.'[1]

In the Panjab when a witch succeeds in taking out a man's liver she will not eat it for two and a half days, and if after eating it she is put under the influence of an exorcist she can be forced to take the liver of some animal and with it replace that extracted from her victim.[2] In the Central Provinces the Sudhiniya or drinker of human blood can be exorcized by seating the patient near a man of the Bharia, a jungle-dwelling caste, who places two pots with their mouths joined over a fire, and recites incantations. When the water boils it turns into blood, this result being attained by using a herb the juice of which stains the water red.[3] The Koyi witch in Madras sucks the blood of her victim by putting his toe in her mouth, whereupon he becomes senseless, and he feels next day as if he had drunk an infusion of Gānja hemp (*Cannabis sativus*). If he is treated by an expert he recovers, if not he becomes gradually emaciated and dies.[4] In one of the folk-tales the Rāni is a witch who extracts the Raja's entrails, sucks them and replaces them as they were before.[5] Many similar cases are on record. In one a young man

[1] *Aīn-i-Akbari*, ii. 338 f.
[2] *N. I. N. Q.* i. 14.
[3] Russell, *T. C.* ii. 248.
[4] Thurston, *T. C.* iv. 69.
[5] Somadeva, i. 289.

quarrelled with a witch about the price of fish and finally took it from her by force, but when he had eaten it disagreeable results followed, and when he died a live fish was taken out of his bowels.[1] In another case a trooper took milk from an old woman without paying for it, and he was attacked by grievous internal pains, but, when she was arrested and ordered to cure him, she set about collecting materials for Puja or worship, and before she finished the rite the pains left him.[2] Again, an orderly took a cock from an old Gond woman without paying for it, cooked it in curry and ate it, but when he went to sleep he was seized with pains, the cock was heard crowing in his belly, and this went on till the hour of his death.[3] In another case a man by accident jostled an old woman in a crowd, and when she cursed him he found that the juice of a piece of sugar-cane which he was chewing had turned into blood. He left the place at once, for every one knows that spells and curses of this kind can reach only a certain distance, some ten or twelve miles, and the sooner you place that distance between yourself and the witch the better.[4]

Witches can injure their victims by pointing some charmed substance at them. An example of this is the Muth or 'handful', reported from Bombay and the Central Provinces. It is a handful of charmed rice or millet sent by a witch against her enemy by the agency of his familiar spirits. It strikes the heart, causes vomiting and spitting of blood, and if the case is not properly treated death follows. Experts declare that they can see it rolling through the air like a red-hot ball. The evil consequences can be averted only by satiating it with blood. A little blood is drawn from the patient and let fall on a charmed lemon, which is cut in pieces and thrown into a river. Or its action can be reversed and it can be sent back to the person who dispatched it by charming a lemon and flinging it in the direction whence the Muth was seen to come. Cases of sudden illness, blood vomiting, and death are attributed to the Muth.[5] Angāmi Nāgas know a kind of pebble, difficult to obtain, which

[1] Manucci, iii. 213.
[2] Sleeman, *Rambles*, 69.
[3] *Ibid.* 69 f.; Manucci, ii. 134.
[4] Sleeman, *op. cit.* 71 f.
[5] Campbell, *Notes*, 204 f.; Russell, *T. C.* ii. 248: cf. the bone charm of Australian natives (Spencer–Gillen, 531 f., 553; Roth, 152 ff.), or 'pointing' among the Malays (Skeat–Blagden, ii. 199).

if merely thrown at a man when he is not looking brings illness on him. It is not necessary that the stone should touch him, it is enough to throw it in his direction.[1] The Soma Nāgas attribute a like power to a berry of a certain tree which need only be concealed in a person's clothes, and their exorcist extracts from the body of a patient all sorts of substances which some malicious person, with the intention of producing disease, has inserted in him.[2]

Black magic may be worked against a person by getting possession of a lock of hair, a tooth, nail-parings, or some secretion like saliva of the intended victim. Among Mikirs in order to bewitch a person it is necessary to have some of his hair, or a fragment of his clothing, which are buried with an egg, some bones, and charcoal. A good exorcist by the force of his inspiration can recover such things by tying a piece of cloth in the shape of a bag and conjuring the articles into it, and when they are recovered the soul of the sufferer returns with them and he gets well.[3] The Gāro warlock puts some hair and scraps of a man's or woman's clothing into a section of a bamboo, offers this to an evil spirit, and with a prayer that the enemy may die hangs up the bamboo near the house fire-place, supposing that as these things dry the victim will pine away ; or the faeces of an enemy are put in an earthen pot and buried in a white ants' nest after invoking the aid of a spirit.[4] Hindus believe that the clippings of the hair and nails when buried in fertile ground will through the life immanent in them grow into a plant, and as the plant waxes in size it will absorb more and more of the owner's life, which will consequently wane and decline.[5] Hence special care should be taken of such things. Parsis, when a tooth is drawn or when the nails are cut say texts over them and bury them five inches under ground.[6] At a Mahār wedding in the Central Provinces the barber cuts the bride's nails, rolls the cuttings in dough, and places them in an earthen pot beside the marriage post, treating in the same way those of the bridegroom ; a month or so after the wedding both pots are thrown into the Narbada river.[7] The ancient ritual provided that the

[1] Hutton, *Angami*, 242 f.
[2] *Id.*, *Sema*, 213 f.
[3] Stack, 36.
[4] Playfair, 46 f.
[5] Russell, i. 102.
[6] *B. G.* ix, part ii, 220.
[7] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 134.

hair cut from a child's head at the end of the first, third, fifth, and seventh year shall be buried in the earth at a place covered with grass or in the neighbourhood of water;[1] and at the end of his studentship, when a Brahman is shaved and his nails cut, the hair and clippings are to be enclosed in a ball of bull's dung and buried in a cow-shed or near a fig tree with holy Darbha grass, with the invocation, 'Thus I hide the sins of so and so'. The better-class Hindus usually wrap up a child's first hair and the nail-cuttings in a ball of dough and throw it into a running stream, sometimes putting a rupee in the ball, so that the rite becomes in the nature of an offering. The same rule is generally followed in the case of the cutting of the hair and nails at investiture with the sacred thread and at marriage; in Berār the first cuttings of the hair of a child are buried in the damp place under the house waterpots, in the hope that the child's hair will grow thickly and plentifully like grass in a damp place.[2] The only exception to this rule of taking care of such things is at places of pilgrimage like Allahabad or Hardwar where the hair shaved from the heads of pilgrims may be seen in great heaps close to the waterside; possibly the sanctity of the place is supposed to prevent any improper use of it, or it is assumed that the barbers will finally consign it to the rivers.

The practice of injuring and torturing an image with the object of causing pain to the person whom it represents is as old as the Atharvaveda.[3] One of the best modern examples of this type of black magic is the life-size nude female figure, with long iron nails driven all over the head, body, and limbs which was washed ashore at Calicut in 1903.[4] The Bāmmargi or left-hand Sākta sect, with the intention of killing an enemy, make an image of flour and clay, stick razors into the breast, navel, and throat, and pegs into its hands and feet. A fire sacrifice is made with meat, and an image of Bhairava or Durgā holding a trident is fixed so that the weapon pierces the breast of the image, and death is invoked on the person whose death is intended.[5] The Chupra warlock in the Panjab makes a figure of a man and

[1] *S. B. E.* xxx. 165 f., 218: cf. xxvi. 135.
[2] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 279; Ja'far Sharif, 39, 121.
[3] *S. B. E.* xlii, 328: cf. *E. R. E.* x. 447.
[4] Thurston, *Notes*, 328 ff., with a photograph; *id.*, *T. C.* vi. 124.
[5] Crooke, *T. C.* i. 137: cf. Ward, i. 501 f.

tortures it by inserting a needle in it, the pain being supposed to reach the individual who is personated.[1] Lushai wizards take an impression of a person's footprints, and put it to dry near the hearth, and clay figures into which bamboo spikes are thrust appear in all cases in which a person is accused of witchcraft.[2]

Many devices of a similar kind are said to injure or destroy an enemy. Village women make a cut with a knife in the clay wall of a house, hoping to wound the owner, or they fix up a naked sword and blow curses on it. But if this is not accurately done the curse will recoil on the person who uttered it.[3] Others take ashes from a cremation ground, mix them with poison and seeds of the Dhatūra or stramonium, and on a Tuesday throw it upon an enemy when he is not on his guard; they grind the bone of a dead man to powder and give it to an enemy in a betel-leaf; on a Tuesday in the Bharani asterism they get a half-burnt stick from a funeral pyre, fix it in front of the enemy's house, and if it is not removed within a month he is sure to die; or they get a scale of a snake, make a lamp saucer out of it, burn in it some Dhatūra oil, collect the lampblack, put it in an enemy's eyes, and he will surely die; to make such magic effective the following charm is recited a hundred and twenty-five times and on the day it is used: 'O thou, like the god of death, destroy my enemy! I salute thee.'[4] When Angāmi Nāgas hold a solemn commination service to punish a man who has violated a taboo, the hereditary leader announces the offence, the clansmen answer, 'Let him die! Let him die!' and in order to strengthen the curse a branch with green leaves is set up to represent the person cursed; every one hurls spears made of wood or bamboo at the bough, saying, 'Kill so and so!' and utter terms of abuse; the spears are left where they lie, and as the bough withers and dies the subject of the curse dies also.[5] When a Kunbi in the Central Provinces wishes to injure the child of an enemy he puts the child's coat out in the sun to dry, believing that the child's body will dry up in like manner.[6]

If a Gond wishes to breed quarrels in an enemy's house he gets

1 Rose, *Gloss.* ii. 208.
2 Shakespear, 109.
3 *N. I. N. Q.* v. 178, 216.
4 *Ibid.* v. 183 f.
5 Hutton, *Angami*, 241.
6 Russell, *T. C.* iv. 30.

some feathers of a crow, seeds of the Amaltās (*Cassia fistula*), or porcupine quills, smokes them over a fire in which some nails have been laid, and ties them to the eaves of his enemy's house, at the same time repeating some charms. The seeds of the Amaltās rattle in their pods when the wind blows, and thus they produce a sound resembling quarrelling. Porcupine quills are sharp and prickly, and crow's feathers are used probably because it is a talkative and quarrelsome bird. The nails being sharp-pointed and heated in the fire adds potency to the charm.[1] In the northern plains if you mix fire taken from two houses, stand a broom in a corner, allow a child to turn over a dirty ladle, or throw a porcupine quill into a house, you will cause quarrelling among the inmates.[2]

Black magic is sometimes used to destroy towns and forts. A refractory village in the Panjab was rendered desolate by the site being ploughed up with a plough to which an ass was yoked, and when the District Officer wished the people to return, in order to counteract the charm, he had the place ploughed by an elephant, but the village is still deserted.[3] When the general of Raja Bhoja conquered Bhīmadeva of Gujarāt he had cowry shells—probably because they are fragile—sown at the gate of his palace.[4] As the Rāwal of Jaisalmer felt himself insulted by the Chief of Dhār, he vowed that he would not drink water till he was avenged. He found it difficult to carry out his vow and Dhār was a long way distant, so he set up a mock fort of Dhār and intended to wreak his vengeance on it. But some of the Pramār clan of Dhār who were in his army protected the structure and many of them were slain. Similar tales are told regarding Būndi and Amber.[5]

In order to add to their efficacy charms are often recited backwards. In one of the folk-tales we read of a charm called 'Forwards and Backwards': 'if a man repeats it forwards he will become invisible to his neighbours, but if he repeats it backwards he will assume whatever shape he desires.'[6] The famous Buddhist charm, 'Om ma-ni pad-mī Hūm!' interpreted to mean literally, 'Om! The jewel in the Lotus!' is repeated

[1] Russell, *T. C.* i. 115, iii. 105.
[2] *P. N. Q.* ii. 205: cf. Ja'far Sharīf.
[3] *N. I. N. Q.* v. 197.
[4] *A. S. R.* 1902–3, p. 211.
[5] Tod, ii. 1199, iii. 1471, 1534.
[6] Somadeva, ii. 221.

backwards by the followers of the heterodox Bon-pa sect.[1] The same practice has been adopted by Musalmān warlocks.[2]

Black magic is often worked through the footprints of the victim. In the Atharvaveda an enemy is injured by reciting a charm, cutting his footprint with a leaf from the Parasu or 'axe' tree, or with the blade of an axe, and a shepherd protects his flock by piercing the imaginary track of the dreaded hostile creature with a pole of Khadira wood (*Acacia catechu*).[3] Cheros in the United Provinces injure an enemy by measuring with a straw his footprints in the dust and muttering a spell over it, a device which causes wounds and sores in the enemy's foot.[4] Infections or pollutions may be spread through footprints, as in the case of the impure Mahārs in Bombay who in the old times were forced to drag a bunch of thorns behind them as they walked to obliterate their footprints and so render it less dangerous for people of the higher castes to use the road.[5] On the other hand, footprints communicate to a person who touches them some good quality of their maker. A barren Kunbi woman takes a piece of the clothing of a mother of a family, a lock of her hair, and some clay which her feet have pressed, and lays them before the shrine of the goddess Devi; sometimes she fashions an image of herself out of these things in the hope that she may become fertile.[6]

It is fortunate that there are many devices by which the powers of a witch or warlock can be destroyed. One method is to cause him or her to be polluted. He is made to drink from a foul tank or from the tub of a washerman, which are polluted by dirty raiment, for one form of Rājput curse is to drop a pebble into a pit and say, 'If I break this oath may the good deeds of my forefathers fall like this stone into the washerman's well!'[7] In Central India the witch was flogged with the branches of the *Nux vomica*, or with a root of the *Palma Christi* or castor-oil plant, the latter possessing such magical qualities that a Chamār or tanner of leather dreads no punishment so greatly as to be struck with it. If after other stripes failed such a beating made

[1] Waddell, *Buddhism*, 148 ff.; *E. R. E.* vii. 555 f.; *J. R. A. S.* 1915, pp. 397 ff.
[2] Ja'far Sharif, 246.
[3] *S. B. E.* xlii. 295, 366 f.
[4] Crooke, *T. C.* ii. 221.
[5] *B. G.* xx. 176.
[6] Russell, *T. C.* iv. 34.
[7] Elliott, 287; Tod, i. 261 f.

the witch cry out he or she was deemed guilty, for these are the only things which can cause pain to such a creature. Finally she was forced to drink the water used by tanners, which involves expulsion from caste ; her nose was cut off, and in really serious cases she was put to death.[1] Pāvras in Bombay used to slit the nose of a suspected witch, partly because this is the traditional way of treating an unfaithful wife, and a special branch of Hindu surgery is devoted to curing such mutilation,[2] and partly because the loss of the nose, like that of the hair, was supposed to prevent the witch from casting the Evil Eye.[3] In Mirzapur up to quite recent times, when a woman was accused of witchcraft, the Baiga or tribal priest and the Ojha or exorcist used to prick her tongue with a needle, and the blood thus extracted was received on some rice which she was forced to eat. In another reported case she was pricked on the tongue, breasts, and thighs, and forced to drink the blood. The rite was more efficacious if performed near a running stream, which presumably was supposed to carry away the evil influence thus extracted from her.

Among the witches of tradition the most notorious was Pūtanā, who caused abortion in women and diseases in children. She took the infant Krishna in her arms and began to suckle him with her devil's milk, a single drop of which would have poisoned a mortal child, but the demi-god drew her breast with such force that he drained her life-blood, and terrifying the Holy Land of Braj with her screams she fell lifeless on the ground.[4] The Palwār clan of Rājputs claim descent from a witch. Soon after the birth of her son she was busy baking cakes. Her infant began to cry, and she was forced to discharge the double duty of nurse and cook. Her husband arrived in time to see his wife assume supernatural, gigantic proportions, so as to allow the baking and the nursing to go on together. But when her secret was discovered—the familiar breach of a taboo which ends the relation between the mortal and the fairy —she disappeared, leaving her child a legacy to her astonished husband.[5]

[1] Malcolm, ii. 215 f.
[2] Chevers, 487 ff.
[3] Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 'Balder the Beautiful', ii. 158 f.
[4] *Vishnu Purāna*, 506 ; Growse, *Mathura*, 55.
[5] Crooke, *T. C.* iv. 211 ; Hartland, *Science of Fairy Tales*, 270 ff.

The most famous and dreaded witch in the northern plains is Lona or Nona Chamārin, 'the salt one', a woman of the currier caste. It is said that Dhanwantari, the physician of the gods, who was produced at the churning of the ocean, was on his way to treat Raja Parikshit, who had been deceived and bitten by Takshaka, the snake king. But it was the physician who died, and on his death-bed he ordered his sons to cook and eat his corpse so that they might acquire the magical skill of their father. But the snake king dissuaded them from eating this unholy food, and advised them to let the cauldron containing it float down in the flood of the Ganges. Lona Chamārin found it stranded on the bank, and by eating the contents acquired the magical knowledge of Dhanwantari, in particular his skill in curing snake-bite. At last she was discovered to be a witch by her strange way of planting rice seedlings. One day the other workers watched her and saw that when she thought she was not observed she stripped herself naked—nudity being a condition of successful magic [1]—took a bundle of plants in her hand, flung them in the air, recited a spell, and lo! each seedling fell into its proper hole in the field. The people cried out in astonishment, and finding herself discovered Lona rushed over the country and forced a way for the present Loni river in Oudh which bears her name. According to another version, the scene of the miracle is transferred to Kāmrūp in Assam, the head-quarters of Northern Indian magic, for here men build houses of which the pillars, walls, and roofs are made of men, some forced to this fate by sorcery, others criminals deserving death.[2] Another story tells that when she exposed her child in the jungle an ascetic found her and named her Paramesvari, 'the almighty' goddess, the witch thus becoming deified, and the influence of Brahmans is seen in the introduction of Dhanwantari into the story. Lona's is now a great name to swear by in Northern India, for she is propitiated by women at child-birth, being also invoked for the cure of snake-bite and other diseases. When murrain appears the owners of cattle employ a wizard to write some mystic numbers and the name of Lona on a potsherd which is hung over the gate by which the cattle enter and leave the

[1] p. 71 above.

[2] *Āīn-i-Akbari*, ii. 117; Buchanan, iii. 510 ff.

village.[1] The story which tells how she ate this awful food is paralleled by a legend of the Koras in Bengal who assert that their ancestor once by mistake ate a human placenta which he found hanging on a tree, and to mark their horror the fruit of this tree is now taboo to the caste.[2]

The reputation of Lona survived even during the puritanical age of Aurangzeb, who would have showed no mercy to witches. The story then was that she dwelt near the city of Cochin and made her living by the sale of 'devil-dolls' in the shape of rats, jewels, buttons, flowers, and the like, within which were enclosed demons who did as she told them. A young man desirous of possessing an honourable woman and unable to buy one of these dolls had recourse to Lunna or Lona, who directed him to bring a hair of the woman. He tried to secure one, but her servant girl befooled him and gave him a hair out of a sieve. Lunna directed him to await in the room the arrival of the woman, when, behold! suddenly a sieve appeared and began to mount on him and worry him, so that he was unable to get rid of it. Finding himself thus pursued, he again had recourse to Lunna, the sieve following him on his way. 'She acted so that he was delivered, and he thereby discovered the trick played on him by the negress.' A Portuguese applied to Lunna for news of his wife whom he had left in Lisbon, and Lunna told him that she was engaged to be married, but promised to help him to stop the wedding. So she bound up his eyes, put a staff in his hand with one end resting on the ground, told him to turn three times, then to let the stick go and open his eyes, when to his amazement he found himself in Lisbon in time to prevent the marriage. He confessed to the Holy Office what he had done and was absolved. The wide distribution of the tale of Lona and its many variants show the deep impression made on the peasantry of Northern India by the wonders wrought by this arch-witch.[3]

Even the shrewdest and strongest historical characters have come under the influence of black magic. It is told of Sivāji that a woman who had gained reputation as a sorceress appeared before him. He asked her sternly if she knew why he had sum-

[1] *N. I. N. Q.* iii. 39; Briggs, 183.
[2] Risley, *T. C.* i. 507.
[3] Manucci, iii. 223 f.

moned her. She replied that she knew he intended to take her life, 'but', said she, 'for your own sake allow me to give you a salutary warning'. She sent for a cock and a hen, wrung off the hen's neck and the cock placed beside her died in convulsions. 'Remember, sir!' she said, 'that this will be a type of my fate and of yours.' So he dismissed her with honour, 'and treated her thenceforwards like a person with whose life his own was bound up';[1] in other words, she was the guardian of his separable soul.

Many tales of this kind might be told, but from the facts which have been stated in preceding pages it is easy to realize the effects which such beliefs produce on the ignorant, credulous peasantry, particularly the more isolated and primitive forest tribes. When disasters, like famine, pestilence, murrain, hail or flood, menace them they are often driven into a state of frenzy from the belief that such calamities are the result of some abnormal agency, such as black magic and witchcraft. At such times unfortunate people, elderly, deformed, cranky, half-witted men and women, who are readily suspected, have been hunted down and treated with savage brutality. Black magic may be allowed to take care of itself, for being anti-social it is opposed to the general interests of the community, and is driven to work in secret among the most degraded classes or in some of the disreputable Sākta sects. Witchcraft, however, and the Evil Eye are living agencies familiar to, and dreaded by, all except the most intelligent classes. It is on record that in those Districts which were for a time lost in the Great Mutiny there was an immediate recrudescence of witch-hunting, and those whose experience of the peasantry qualifies them to express an opinion are satisfied that any relaxation of the reign of British law would lead to outbreaks of a fanaticism and a revival of the grosser forms of superstition of which some account has been given in this work.

[1] Grose, 140 f.

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